

PRECIOUS REMEDIES

AGAINST

SATAN'S DEVICES;

BEING

A COMPANION FOR CHRISTIANS OF ALL
DENOMINATIONS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

IMPEDIMENTS TO ASSURANCE,

AND

THE MEANS OF REMOVING THEM.

BY THE LATE REVEREND

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AGAINST

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DENOMINATIONS.

Beloved in our dearest Lord,

CHRIST,—the Scripture,—your own Hearts,—and Satan's Devices, are the four things that should be first and most studied and searched ; if any cast off the study of these, they cannot be safe here, nor happy hereafter. It is my work, as a CHRISTIAN, but much more as a WATCHMAN, (Ezek. xxxiii. 7.) to do my best, to discover the fulness of Christ, the emptiness of the creature, and the snares of the great deceiver ; (which I have endeavoured to do, in the following discourse) according to that measure of grace which I have received from the Lord. God once accepted a morsel of meat for a sacrifice, and a handful of goat's hair for an oblation : and I know that you have not so learned the Father, as to despise the day of small things.

Beloved, Satan being fallen from light to darkness ; from felicity to misery ; from heaven to hell ; from an angel to a devil, is so full of malice and envy, that he will leave no means unattempted, whereby he may make all others eternally miserable with himself ; he being shut out of heaven, and reserved under chains of darkness till the judgment of the great day, makes use of all his power and skill, to bring all the sons of men into the same condition, and condemnation with himself. Satan

hath cast such sinful seed into our souls, that now he no sooner tempts, but we are ready to assent; he no sooner has a plot, but he makes a conquest; if he does but shew men a little of the glory of the world, how ready are they to fall down and worship him?

Whatever sin the heart of man is most prone to, that the devil will help forward. If Peter be slavishly fearful, Satan will put him upon rebuking and denying of Christ, to save his own skin.

From the power, malice, and skill of SATAN, proceeds all the soul-killing plots, devices, stratagems, and machinations, that are in the world. Several devices he hath to draw souls to sin, and several plots he hath to keep souls from all holy and heavenly services; and also numberless stratagems to keep them in a mourning, staggering, and doubting condition.

A man may as well tell the stars, and number the sands of the sea, as reckon up all the devices of Satan; yet those which are most considerable, and by which he doth most mischief to the precious souls of men, are in the following Treatise discovered, and the Remedies against them prescribed.

Beloved, *Give me leave to signify my desires for, and to you.*

My desires for you are, "That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, &c." Ephes. iii. 16—19. And "that ye might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, &c." Col. i. 10, 11. "That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment, &c." Phil. i. 9, 10. And that you may be eminent in holiness; Ps. xciii. 5. Holiness being Zion's glory, that your hearts may be

kept upright, your judgments sound, and your lives unblameable. That as ye are now my joy, so in the day of Christ you may be my crown : that I may see my labours in your lives, that your conversation may not be earthly, when the things you hear are heavenly : but that it may be as becomes the gospel. That as the fishes which live in the salt sea, yet are fresh ; so you, though you live in an uncharitable world, may yet be charitable and loving. That you may, like the bee, suck honey out of every flower ; that you may shine in a sea of troubles, as the pearl shines in the sky, though it grow in the sea ; that in all your trials, you may be like the stones in Thracia, that are said neither to burn in the fire, nor to sink in the water. That you may be like the heavens, excellent in substance, and beautiful in appearance ; that so you may meet me with joy, in that day, wherein Christ shall say to his Father, Lo ! here am I, and the children which thou hast given me !

Finally, remember this, that your life is short, your duties many, your assistance great, and your reward sure ; therefore faint not, hold on, and hold up in ways of well doing, and heaven shall make amends for all.

I shall now take leave of you, when my heart hath by my hand subscribed, that I am,

Your loving pastor under Christ, according to all pastoral affections and engagements in our dearest Lord.

THOMAS BROOKS.

TO THE READER.

Dear Friend,

SOLOMON bids us buy the truth, *Prov. xxiii. 23.* but does not tell us what it must cost, because we must get it though it be ever so dear; we must love it both shining and scorching; every parcel of truth is precious as the filings of gold; we must either live with it, or die for it. As Ruth said to Naomi, *Whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge, and nothing but death shall part thee and me: Ruth i. 16, 17.* If truth be the cause of contention, nothing but death can separate me from it, and even that cannot do it;—*Jerome.* So must gracious spirits say, Where truth goes, I will go, and where truth lodges, I will lodge, and nothing but death shall part me and truth. A man may lawfully sell his house, land, and jewels, but truth is a jewel that exceeds all price, and must not be sold, it is our heritage. *Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, Ps. cxix. 111.* It is a legacy that our fore-fathers have bought with their blood, which should make us willing to lay down any thing, and lay out every thing, that we may with the wise merchant in the gospel, *Matt. xiii. 46.* purchase this precious pearl, which is worth more than heaven and earth, and which will make a man live happily, die comfortably, and reign eternally.

And now if you please, read the following work, and receive this counsel from me.

First, You must know that every man cannot be excellent, yet he may be useful. An iron key may unlock the door of a golden treasure, yea, iron can do some things that gold cannot do.

Secondly, Remember, it is not hasty reading, but seriously meditating upon holy and heavenly truths, that makes them prove sweet and profitable to the soul. It is not the bee's touching of the flowers that gathers honey, but her abiding for a time upon them, and drawing out the sweet. It is not he that reads most, but he that meditates most, that will prove the choicest, sweetest, wisest, and strongest Christian.

Thirdly, Know that it is not the *knowing*, the *talking*, nor the *reading* man, but the *doing* man, that at last will be found the happiest man : "If you know these things, blessed and happy are you if you do them. Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father that is in heaven." It was a good saying of Justin Martyr, Our religion consists not in speaking of the things, but in doing them. Judas called Christ, Lord, Lord, and yet betrayed him, and is gone to his place ; Ah ! how many Judas's have we in these days that kiss Christ, and yet betray Christ ; that in their words profess him, but in their works deny him ; that bow their knee to him, and yet in their hearts despise him ; that call him Jesus, and yet will not obey him for their Lord.

Reader, If it be not impressed upon your heart to practice what you read, to what end do you read, to increase your own condemnation ? If your light and knowledge be not turned into practice, the more knowing you are, the more miserable you will be in the day of recompence ; your light and knowledge will torment you more than all the devils

in hell. Your knowledge will be a rod that will eternally lash you, and the scorpion that will for ever bite you, and the worm that will everlastinglly gnaw you ; therefore read, and labour to know, that you may *do*, or else you are undone for ever. When *Demosthenes* was asked, what was the first part of an orator, what the second, what the third ? he answered, Action. The same may I say, if any should ask me, what is the first, the second, the third part of a Christian ? I must answer, Action. That man who reads that he may know, and labours to know that he may do, will have two heavens, a heaven of joy, peace and comfort on earth, and a heaven of glory and happiness after death. Desiring that you may find as much sweetness and advantage in reading this treatise, as I have found, (by the overshadowing of heaven) in the studying and writing of it, I recommend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them which are sanctified. And I rest,

READER,

Your Soul's Servant in every
Office of the Gospel,

THOMAS BROOKS.

PRECIOUS REMEDIES
AGAINST
SATAN'S DEVICES.

2 COR. ii. 11.

*Lest Satan should get an advantage of us : for we
are not ignorant of his devices.*

IN the fifth verse the Apostle shews, that the incestuous person had, by his incest, made sad those precious souls that God would not have made sad : souls that walk sinfully, are Hazaels to the godly, and draw many sighs and tears from them. Jeremiah weeps in secret for Judah's sins ; and St. Paul cannot speak of them with dry eyes, *Phil. iii. 18.* And Lot's righteous soul was *burthened, vexed, and racked*, by the filthy inhabitants of Sodom, *2 Pet. ii. 7, 8.* Every one of them was an Hazaël to his eyes, an Hadadrimmon to his heart. Gracious souls mourn for other men's sins as well as their own, and for their souls and sins who make a mock of sin, and a jest of damning their own souls. Guilt or grief, is all that gracious men get by communion with such vain persons, *Ps. cxix. 136--158.*

In the 6th verse he shews, that the punishment that was inflicted upon the incestuous person, was sufficient, and therefore they should not refuse to receive him who had repented, and sorrowed for his former faults and follies. It is not for the honour of Christ, the credit of the gospel, nor the good of souls, for professors to be like those bloody wretches, that burnt some that recanted at the stake, saying, *That they should send them out of the world while they were in a good mind.*

In the 7, 8, 9, and 10th verses, the Apostle stirs up the church to forgive him, to comfort him, and

to confirm their love towards him, lest he should be swallowed up with over much sorrow ; Satan going about to mix the detestable darnel of desperation, with the godly sorrow of a pure penitent heart. It was a sweet saying of Jerome, *Let a man grieve for his sin, and then joy for his grief* : that sorrow for sin that keeps the soul from looking towards the mercy-seat, and that keeps Christ and the soul asunder, or that renders the soul unfit for the communion of saints, is a sinful sorrow.

In the 11th verse, he lays down another reason to move them to shew pity to the penitent sinner, that was mourning under his sin and misery ; i. e. *Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.*

The comparison is taken from the greedy merchant, that seeketh and taketh all opportunities to beguile and deceive others. Satan is that wily merchant, that devoureth not widows' houses, but many souls.

We are not ignorant of Satan's devices, counsels, plots, machinations, or stratagems ; he is a Christian in name only that has not personal experience of Satan's stratagems, his set and composed machinations, his artificially moulded methods, his plots, darts, and depths, whereby he outwitted our first parents, and puts the cheat upon us still, as he sees opportunity.

The main observation that I shall draw from these words, is this :

That Satan hath his several devices to deceive, entangle, and ruin the souls of men.

I shall,

1. Introduce the subject.
2. Shew you his several Devices. And
3. The remedies against his Devices.
4. How it comes to pass, that he hath so many

several Devices to deceive, entangle, and ruin the souls of men.

5. I shall lay down some propositions concerning Satan's devices.

For the proof of the subject take these few scriptures, Ephes. vi. 11. *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.* The Greek word that is here rendered *wiles*, is a notable emphatical word.

1. It signifies such treacheries as come upon one's back at unawares. It notes the method or way-layings of that old subtle servant, who, like *Dan's adder* in the path, bites the heels of passengers, and thereby transfuses his venom to the head and heart. The word signifies an ambushment, or stratagem of war, whereby the enemy sets upon a man *at unawares*.

2. It signifies such snares as are set to catch us in our road : a man walks in his road, and thinks not of it ; but suddenly he is taken by thieves, or falls into a pit, &c.

3. It signifies such as are purposely and craftily set for the taking the prey at the greatest advantage that can be ; the Greek signifies properly a way-laying, circumvention, or going about, as they do which seek after their prey. Julian by his craft drew more from the faith, than all his persecuting predecessors could do by their cruelty. So Satan does more hurt in his sheep's skin, than by roaring like a lion.

Take one scripture more for the proof of the subject, and that is in 2 Tim. ii. 26. "And that they might recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." The Greek word that is here rendered *recover themselves*, signifies to awake themselves ; the Apostle alludes to one that is asleep, or drunk,

who is to be awakened and restored to his senses ; and the Greek word that is here rendered *taken captive*, signifies to be taken alive ; the word is, properly, a warlike word, and signifies to be taken alive as soldiers are taken alive in the wars, or as birds are ensnared and taken alive by the fowler. Satan has snares for the wise and simple ; for generous and for timorous souls ; for the rich and the poor ; for the aged and for youth, &c. Happy are those who are not taken and held in the snares that he has laid.

One proof more, and then I will proceed to the opening of the subject, and that is Rev. ii. 24. “ But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak ; I will put upon you no other burden, but to hold fast till I come.” Those poor souls called their opinions the depths of God, when, indeed, they were the depths of Satan, you call your opinions depths, and so they are, but they are such depths as Satan has brought out of hell ; they are the whisperings and hissings of that serpent, not the inspirations of God. So much by way of Introduction.

Now I am to shew you his several devices ; and ~~by~~ ⁱⁿ I shall first shew you the Devices he has to draw the soul to sin : I shall instance these twelve, which may bespeak our most serious consideration.

Satan's Devices to draw the Soul to Sin.

CHAPTER I.

His first Device to draw the soul to sin, is,
To present the bait, and hide the hook ; to present
the golden cup, and hide the poison ; to present

the sweet and the pleasure, that may flow into the soul by yielding to sin, and hide from the soul the wrath and misery that will certainly follow the committing of sin.* By this Device he took our first parents, *And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.* Your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods; here is the bait, the sweet, the pleasure, the profit. Oh! but he hides the hook, the shame, the wrath, and the loss that would certainly follow.

There is an opening of the eyes of the mind to contemplation and joy, and there is an opening of the eyes of the body to shame and confusion. He promises the former, but intends the latter, and so cheats them, giving them an apple instead of Paradise; as he deals by thousands in the present day. Satan with ease puts fallacies upon us, by his golden baits, and then leads us, and leaves us in a fool's paradise; he promises the soul honour, pleasure, profit, &c. but pays it with the greatest contempt, shame, and loss that can be; by a golden bait he laboured to catch Christ, *Mat. iv. 8, 9.* He showed him the beauty and glory of the world, which doubtless would have taken many a carnal heart; but here the devil's fire fell upon wet tinder, and therefore took not; these tempting objects did not at all win upon his affections, but many have fallen for ever by this vile strumpet the world, who, by laying forth her profit and pleasure, hath wounded their souls and cast them down into utter perdition:† she hath, by the glittering of her

* So to seduce Dr. Taylor, the martyr, they promised him not only his pardon, but a bishopric.

† Many are miserable by loving hurtful things, but they

pomp and preferment, slain millions. Adversity has slain her thousands, but prosperity her tens of thousands.---Now the Remedies against this Device of the devil, are these :

Remedy I. Keep at the greatest distance from sin, and from playing with the golden bait that Satan holds forth to catch you ; see *Rom.* xii. 9. *Abhor that which is evil*, &c. when we meet with any thing extremely evil, and contrary to us, nature abhors it, and retires as far as it can from it. The Greek word that is here rendered *abhor*, is very significant ; it signifies to hate it as hell itself, to hate it with horror.

Anselm used to say, *That if he should see the shame of sin on the one hand, and the pains of hell on the other, and must of necessity choose one, he would rather be thrust into hell without sin than go into heaven with it.* It is our wisest and safest course to stand at the greatest distance from sin : not to go near the house of the harlot, *Prov.* v. 8. but to flee from all appearance of evil, *1 Thess.* v. 22. The best course to prevent falling into the pit, is to keep at the greatest distance ; he that will be so bold as to dance upon its brink, may find by woeful experience, that it is a righteous thing with God, that he should fall into it. Joseph keeps at a distance from sin ; David comes near the snare, and is taken in it, and gets broken bones, a wounded conscience, and the frowns of God.

Sin is a plague, yea, the greatest and most infectious plague in the world ; and yet, how few are there that so tremble at it, as to keep at a distance from it ? *1 Cor.* v. 6. *Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump ?* As soon

are more miserable by having them. Pray with Bernard, “Grant us, Lord, that we may so partake of temporal felicity, that we may not lose eternal.”

as one sin had seized upon Adam's heart, all sin entered into the soul and overspread it. Adam's one sin has spread over all mankind ; *Rom. v. 12.* *Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* Ah ! how does the father's sin infect the child, the husband infect the wife, the master the servant ?* The sin that is in one man's heart, is able to infect a whole world, it is of such a spreading and infectious nature.

Rem. II. Consider that sin is but a bitter sweet ; that seeming sweet that is in sin will quickly vanish, and lasting shame and sorrow will come in the room thereof, *Job xx. 12, 13, 14.* " Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue, though he spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his mouth, yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him." Forbidden profits and pleasures are most pleasing to vain men, who count madness mirth, &c. Many long to be meddling with the murdering morsels of sin, which nourish not, but rend and consume the heart and soul that receives them. Many eat that on earth, that they digest in hell ; sin's murdering morsels will deceive them that devour them. After the meal is ended, comes the reckoning : men must not think to dance and dine with the devil, and then to sup with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven : to feed upon the poison of asps, and yet that the viper's tongue should not slay them.

Rem. III. Solemnly consider, that sin will usher in the greatest losses that can be, upon our souls ;

* Evil communication corrupts good manners ; and by evil example, especially in superiors, much mischief is done. Superiors cannot be too much upon their watch, in their lives and conduct. D.

it will usher in the loss of that divine favour that is better than life, and the loss of the *joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, and the loss of that peace that passeth understanding*, and the loss of many outward desirable mercies, which otherwise the soul might have enjoyed.

It was a sound reply of an English captain, at the loss of Calais, when a proud Frenchman scornfully demanded, ‘When will you fetch Calais again?’ he replied, ‘When your sins shall weigh down ours.’

Rem. IV. Seriously consider, that sin is of a very deceitful and bewitching nature; sin is from the greatest deceiver, it is a child of his own begetting, it is the ground of all the deceit in the world, and, in its own nature, is exceedingly deceitful, *Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened, through the deceitfulness of sin.* It will kiss the soul, and pretend fair to it, and yet betray it for ever; it will, with Delilah, smile upon us, that it may betray us into the hand of the devil, as she did Samson into the hands of the Philistines. Sin gives Satan power over us, and advantage to accuse us and lay claim to us, as those that wear his badge; it is of a very bewitching nature, where it is upon the throne of the heart it so deceives, that the soul cannot leave it, though it perish eternally by it. Sin so bewitches the soul, that it makes it *call evil good, and good evil; bitter sweet, and sweet bitter; light darkness, and darkness light;* and a soul thus bewitched with sin, will stand it out to the death, at the sword’s point with God: let God strike and wound, and cut to the very bone, yet the bewitched soul cares not, fears not, but will hold on in a course of wickedness, as you may see in Pharaoh, Balaam, and Judas; tell such a soul,

that sin is a viper that will certainly kill when it is not killed ; that sin often kills secretly, insensibly, eternally, yet the deceived soul cannot, nor will not cease from sin.

When the physicians told Theotimus, that except he did abstain from drunkenness and uncleanness, &c. he would lose his eyes ; his heart was so bewitched to his sins that he answered, *Then farewell sweet light* ; he had rather lose his eyes than leave his sin : so a man bewitched with sin, had rather lose God, Christ, heaven, and his own soul, than part with his sin.

CHAPTER II.

The second Device of Satan to draw the soul to sin, is,

By painting sin in virtuous colours. Satan knows that if he should present sin in its own nature and dress, the soul would rather flee from it, than yield to it, and therefore he presents it to us, painted and gilded over with the name and shew of virtue, that we may more easily be overcome by it, and take more pleasure in committing it. Pride, he presents to the soul under the name of neatness and cleanliness ; covetousness, (which the apostle condemns for idolatry) to be but good husbandry ; drunkenness, good fellowship ; rioting, under the notion of liberality ; and wantonness is a trick of youth, &c. ---The Remedies against this Device of Satan are these :

Remedy I. First, consider that sin is no less filthy, vile, and abominable, for being coloured and painted with virtuous colours. A poisonous pill is no less poisonous because it is gilded over with gold ; nor is a wolf less ravenous because he has put on a sheep's skin ; nor is the devil less a devil,

because he appears sometimes like an angel of light. So neither is sin less filthy and abominable, because it is painted over with fair colours.

Rem. II. The more sin is painted forth under the colour of virtue, the more dangerous it is to the souls of men: this we see evident in these days, by those very many souls that are turned out of the holy way, into ways of the highest vanity and folly, by Satan's neat colouring over sin, and painting forth vice with the colour of virtue. This is so notorious, that I need but name it; the most dangerous vermin are too often found under the fairest and sweetest flowers. So are the fairest and sweetest names, put upon the greatest and most horrible vices and errors that are in the world.

Rem. III. Look on sin with that eye, which within a few hours we shall see it. Ah, souls! when you shall lie upon a dying bed, and stand before a judgment seat, sin shall be unmasked, and its robes will be taken off, and then it shall appear more terrible than hell itself: then that which formerly appeared most sweet, will appear most bitter, and that which appeared most beautiful, will appear most ugly, and that which appeared most delightful, will then appear most dreadful to the soul. - Ah! the shame, the pain, the horror, that the sight of sin, when its dress is taken off, will raise in poor souls. Conscience will work at last, though for the present one may feel no fit of accusation. *Laban* shewed himself at parting, and sin will be bitterness in the latter end, when it shall appear to the soul in its own filthy nature. Oh! therefore look upon sin now, as you must look upon it to all eternity, and as God and your conscience will present it to you another day.

Rem. IV. Seriously consider, that even those very sins that Satan paints, and puts new names

and colours upon, cost the best, the noblest, even the life-blood, of the Lord Jesus. That Christ should come from the eternal bosom of his Father, to a region of sorrow and death; that God should be manifested in the flesh, the Creator made a creature; that he that was clothed with glory, should be wrapped with rags of flesh; he that filled heaven and earth with his glory, should be cradled in a manger; that the power of God should fly from the weakness of man, the God of Israel go down into Egypt, that the God of the law should be subject to the law; the God of circumcision, circumcised; that he who binds the devils in chains, should be tempted; that he whose is the world, and the fulness thereof, should hunger and thirst; that the God of strength should be weary, the Judge of all flesh condemned, the God of life put to death: that he who is one with the Father, should cry, out of misery, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?** That he who had the keys of hell and death at his girdle, should lie imprisoned in the sepulchre of another, having in his life time, no where to lay his head, nor after death to lay his body: that the head before which the angels cast down their crowns, should be crowned with thorns; and those eyes purer than the sun, put out by the darkness of death; those ears, which hear nothing but hallelujahs of saints and angels, to hear the blasphemies of the multitude; that face, that was fairer than the sons of

* One of the Rabbins, when he read what bitter torments the Messiah should suffer, when he came into the world, cried out, "Let the Messiah come, but let me not see him." Dionysius being in Egypt, at the time of Christ's sufferings and seeing an eclipse of the sun, and knowing it to be contrary to nature, cried out, "Either the God of nature suffers, or the frame of the world will be dissolved."

men, to be spit on by those filthy wretched Jews; that mouth and tongue *that spake as never man spake*, accused for blasphemy; those hands that freely swayed the sceptre of heaven, and those *feet like unto fine brass*, nailed to the cross for man's sins; each sense annoyed, his feeling or touching with a spear and nails; his smell with stinking savour, being crucified about Golgotha, the place of skulls; his taste with vinegar and gall; his hearing with reproaches, and the sight of his mother and disciples bemoaning him; his soul comfortless and forsaken, and all this for those very sins that Satan paints, and puts fine colours upon; Oh! how should the consideration of this stir up the soul against it, and induce the soul to fly from it, and to use all holy means, whereby sin may be subdued and destroyed. It is an excellent saying of Bernard, *The more vile Christ made himself for us, the more dear he ought to be to us.*

When we consider that sin hath slain our Lord Jesus, ah! how should it provoke our hearts to be revenged on sin, that murdered the Lord of glory, and has done that mischief, that all the devils in hell could not have done.

It was a good counsel one gave, *Never let go out of your mind, the thoughts of a crucified Christ*: let these be meat and drink unto you; let them be your sweetness and consolation; your honey, and your desire; your reading and your meditation; your life, death, and resurrection.

CHAPTER III.

The third Device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin, is,

By extenuating of sin. As Lot said of Zoar, *It is but a little one, and my soul shall live*: Gen. xix. 20.

alas, saith Satan, it is but a very little sin you stick so at: you may commit it without any danger to your soul, you may commit it, and yet your soul shall live.---The Remedies against this Device of Satan, are these :

Remedy I. First, solemnly consider, that those sins which we are apt to account small, have brought upon men the greatest wrath of God.* The least sin is contrary to the law, the nature, the being, and the glory of God; and therefore is often punished severely by him; and do we not see daily the vengeance of the Almighty falling upon the bodies, names, states, families, and souls of men, for those sins that are but little ones in their eyes? Surely if we are not utterly left of God, and blinded by Satan, we cannot but see it. Oh therefore! when Satan says it is but a little one, do thou say, oh! but those sins that thou callest little, are such as will cause God to send destruction upon sinners, as he did upon the inhabitants of Sodom.

Rem. II. Seriously consider, that giving way to less sins, makes way for the committing of greater. He that to avoid a greater sin, will yield to a less, ten thousand to one, but God in justice will leave that soul to fall into a greater. Sin is of an encroaching nature, it creeps on the soul by degrees, step by step, till it brings the soul to the very height of sin.† David gives way to his wandering eye, and this led him to those foul sins that caused God to break his bones, and to turn his day into

* Draco the rigid law-giver, being asked why (when sins were not equal) he appointed death to all? answered, "He knew that sins were not all equal, but he knew the least deserved death." So though the sins of men be not all equal, yet the least of them deserves eternal death.

† Psal. cxxxvii. 9. "Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." Hugo's gloss is pious, &c. "Let there be nothing in thee of Babylon;

night, and to leave his soul in great darkness. Jacob and Peter, and other saints, have found this true by woeful experience, that the yielding to a little sin, has been the ushering in of a greater ; the little thief will open the door, and make way for the greater, and the little wedge knocked in, will make way for the greater. Satan will first draw you to sit with the drunkard, and then sip with him ; and then at last to be drunk with him ; he first will draw you to be unclean in your thoughts, and then to be so in your looks, and then to be so in your words, and at last to be unclean in your practices : he will first draw you to look on the golden wedge, and then to like it, and then to handle it, and at last by wicked ways to gain it, though you run the hazard of losing God, and your soul for ever : as you may see in Gehazi, Achan, and Judas, and many in these our days. Sin is never at a stand, *Ps. i. 1.* first *ungodly*, then *sinners*, then *scorners* ; here they go on from sin to sin, till they come to the top of sin, viz. *to sit in the seat of scorners*, or as it is in the Septuagint, to *affect the honour of the chair of pestilence*.

Austin writing upon St. John, tells a story of a certain man, that was of opinion that the devil made the fly, and not God ; one said to him, if the devil made flies, the devil made worms, and not God, for they are living creatures as well as flies : true, said he, the devil made worms ; but said the other, if the devil made worms, then he made birds, beasts, and man ; he granted all : "Thus," saith St. Austin, "by denying God in the fly, he came to deny God in man, and to deny the whole creation."

By all this we see, that the yielding to less sins,

not only the grown men, but the little ones must be dashed against the stones ; not only great sins but little sins must be killed, or they will kill the soul for ever."

draws the soul to the committing of greater. Ah ! how many in these days are fallen, first to have low thoughts of *scripture* and *ordinances*, and then to slight them, and then to make a nose of wax of them, and then to cast them off, and at last, to advance and lift up themselves, and Christ dishonouring, and soul-damning opinions, above *scripture* and *ordinances*. Sin gains upon man's soul by insensible degrees. *Eccl.* x. 13. "The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is mischievous madness." When a man begins to sin, he knows not where, or when, or how he shall make an end ; usually the soul goes on from evil to evil, from folly to folly, till it is ripe for eternal misery.

Rem. III. Against this third Device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin, solemnly consider, that it is sad to stand with God for a trifle : Dives would not give a crumb, *Luke* xvi. 21. therefore he should not receive a drop ; it is the greatest folly in the world to adventure going to hell for a small matter. *I tasted but a little honey*, said Jonathan, *and I must die*, *1 Sam.* xiv. 43. It is a most unkind and unfaithful thing to part with God for a little ; little sins carry with them but little temptations to sin, and then a man shews most viciousness and unkindness, when he sins by a little temptation. It is devilish to sin without a temptation, it is little less than devilish to sin on a little occasion ;* the less the temptation is to sin, the greater is that sin ; Saul's sin in not staying for Samuel, was not so much in the matter, but it was

* It was a vexation to king Lysimachus, that his staying to drink one small draught of water lost him his kingdom ; and so it will eternally vex some souls at last, that for some one little sin (compared with great transgressions) they have lost God, heaven, and their souls for ever.

much in the evil of it, for though Samuel had not come at all, yet Saul should not have offered sacrifice ; but this cost him his life and kingdom.

It is the greatest unkindness that can be shewed to a friend, to hazard wounding and grieving of his soul upon a slight occasion : So it is the greatest unkindness that we can shew to God, Christ, and the Spirit, to put God upon complaining, Christ upon bleeding, and the Spirit upon grieving, by yielding to little sins ; therefore, when Satan says it is but a little one, answer, that oftentimes there is the greatest unkindness shewed to God's glorious majesty, in committing the least folly, and therefore you will not displease your best and greatest friend, by yielding to his least enemy.

Rem. IV. Against this Device of Satan, seriously consider, that there is great danger, yea, many times most danger in the smallest sins. *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,* 1 Cor. v. 6. If the serpent wind in his head, he will draw in his whole body after. Little sins often steal into the soul, and breed, and work secretly* and undiscernably in the soul, till they come to be so strong, as to trample upon and destroy it : there is oftentimes greatest danger to our bodies in the least diseases, because we are apt to make light of them, and to neglect the timely use of means to remove them, till they grow so strong, that they prove mortal to us : so there is often most danger in the least sins, we are apt to take no notice of them, and to neglect those heavenly helps whereby they should be

* Cæsar was stabbed with bodkins—Pope Adrian was choaked with a gnat—A scorpion is little, yet able to sting a lion to death--A mouse is but little, yet killeth an elephant, if he get up into his trunk--The smallest errors prove many times the most dangerous.

weakened and destroyed, till they are grown to that strength, that we are ready to cry out, the medicine is too weak for the disease ; I would pray, and I would hear, but I am afraid that sin is grown up by degrees to such a head, that I shall never be able to prevail over it ; but as I have begun to fall, so I shall utterly fall before it, and at last perish in it, unless the power and free grace of Christ appear for me gloriously, beyond my present apprehension and expectation. Many men are eternally killed and betrayed by the little sins (as they call them) that are nourished in their own bosoms.

A little hole in a ship sinks it ; a small breach in a sea bank carries away all before it ; a little stab in the heart kills a man ; and a little sin without a great deal of mercy, will damn him.*

Rem. V. Against this device of Satan, solemnly consider, that other saints have chosen to suffer the worst of torments, rather than commit the least sin : i. e. such as are so in the world's account ; as you may see in Daniel and his companions, who rather chose to burn or be cast to the lions, than bow to the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. When this trifle (in the world's account) and a hot fiery furnace stood in competition, and they must either fall into sin, or be cast into the fiery furnace, such was their tenderness of the honour and glory of God, and their hatred and indignation against sin, that they would rather burn than sin.

I have read of that noble servant of God, Marcus Arethusius, minister of a church in the time of Constantine, who, in Constantine's time, had been the cause of overthrowing an idol's temple ; afterwards

* One little miscarriage in the eyes of the world, overshadows all a Christian's graces, as one cloud sometimes overshadows the whole body of the sun.

when Julian came to be emperor, and insisted that the people of that place should build it up again ; they were ready to do it, but Marcus refused ; whereupon, those that were his own people to whom he preached, took him, and stripped him of all his clothes, and tormented his naked body, and exposed it to children, to lance it with their pen-knives, and then caused him to be put in a basket, and anointed him with honey, and set him in the sun to be stung with wasps ; and all this cruelty they shewed, because he would not do any thing towards building up this idol temple ; nay, they came to this, that if he would do but the least towards it, if he would give but a halfpenny to it, they would save him . but he refused all, though the giving of a halfpenny might have saved his life ; and in so doing, he only lived up to that principle that most Christians talk of, and all profess, but which few come up to, viz. *That we must choose rather to suffer the worst of torments that men and devils can invent and inflict, than to commit the least sin, whereby God should be dishonoured, our consciences wounded, religion reproached, and our own souls endangered.*

Rem. VI. Seriously consider that the soul is never able to stand under the guilt and weight of the least sin, when God shall set it home upon it ; the least sin will press and sink the stoutest sinner as low as hell, when God shall open his eyes, and make him see the horrid filthiness, and abominable vileness of sin. What so little, base, and vile creatures as lice or gnats ? And yet by these poor little creatures, God so plagued stout-hearted Pharaoh, and all Egypt, that fainting under it, they were forced to cry out, *This is the finger of God, Exod. viii. 16--19.* When little creatures, yea, the least creatures, are armed with power from God, they press and sink down the greatest, proudest, and

stoutest tyrants* that breathe : so when God casts a sword into the hand of a little sin, and arms it against the soul, it will faint and fall under it.†

Mr. Perkins mentions a good, but very poor man, who being ready to starve, stole a lamb, and being about to eat it with his poor children, and (as his manner was before meat) to crave a blessing, durst not do it, but fell into great perplexity of conscience, acknowledged his fault to the owner, promising payment if ever he should be able.

Rem. VII. Solemnly consider, that there is more evil in the least sin, than in the greatest affliction ; and this appears as clear as the sun, by the severe dealing of God the Father with his beloved Son, who poured all the vials of his fiercest wrath upon him, and that for the least sin, as well as for the greatest.

The wages of sin is death ; of sin indefinitely, whether great or small.‡ Oh ! how should this make us tremble, as much at the least spark of lust, as at hell itself ! Considering that God the Father would not spare his bosom Son, no, not for the least sin, but would make him drink the dregs of his wrath.

* The Tyrant Maximinus, who had set forth his proclamation engraven in brass, for the utter abolishing of Christ and his religion, was eaten of lice.

† One drop of an evil conscience swallows up the whole sea of worldly joy.

‡ Death is the hire of the least sin ; the best wages that the least sin gives his soldiers, is death of all sorts. In a strict sense, there is no little sin, because there is no little God to sin against.

CHAPTER IV.

The fourth Device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin, is,

By presenting to the soul the best man's sins, and by hiding from the soul their virtues; by shewing the soul their sins, and by hiding from the soul their sorrows and repentance; as by setting before the soul the adultery of David, the pride of Hezekiah, the impatience of Job, the drunkenness of Noah, the blasphemy of Peter, &c. and by hiding from the soul the tears, the sighs, the groans, the meltings, the humblings, and repentings of those precious souls.---The Remedies against this Device of the Devil are these:

Remedy I. Seriously consider, that the Spirit of the Lord has been as careful to note the saints rising by repentance *out of* sin, as he hath to mark their fallings *into* sin. David falls fearfully, but by repentance he rises sweetly; “Blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin: for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation.” It is true, Hezekiah’s heart was lifted up upon the abundance of mercies God had given him, and it is as true that “Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, so that the wrath of the Lord came not upon him, nor upon Jerusalem, in the days of Hezekiah.” It is true, Job curses the day of his birth, and it is as true, that he rises by repentance. “Behold I am vile, saith he, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth: once have I spoken, but I will not answer, yea twice, but I will proceed no

further. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth thee : wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," *Job.* xl. 4, 5. xlvi. 5, 6. Peter falls dreadfully, but rises by repentance sweetly, a look of love from Christ melts him into tears : he knew that repentance was the key of the kingdom of grace. As once his faith was so great that he leaped into a sea of waters to come to Christ; so now his repentance was so great, that he leaped into a sea of tears, for that he had gone from Christ.*

Clement tells us, That Peter so repented, that all his life after, every night when he heard the cock crow, he would fall upon his knees, and weeping bitterly, would beg the pardon of his sin. Ah, souls! you can easily sin as the saints! Many can sin with David and Peter, but cannot repent with them, and so must perish for ever.

Theodosius the emperor, pressing that he might receive the Lord's supper, excuses his own foul fact by David's doing the like, to which Ambrose replies, *Thou hast followed David transgressing, follow David repenting, and then think thou of the table of the Lord.*

Rem. II. Consider also, *That these saints did not make a trade of sin;* they fell once or twice (and rose by repentance) that they might keep closer to Christ for ever ; they fell accidentally, occasionally, and with much reluctance ; and thou sinnest presumptuously, obstinately, readily, delightfully, and customarily ; thou hast, by making a trade of sin, contracted upon thy soul a kind of a cursed

* Luther confesses, that before his conversion he met not with a more displeasing word in all his study of divinity, than Repent, but afterwards he took delight in the work. "To sorrow for his sin, and then to rejoice in his sorrow."

necessity of sinning, *that thou canst as well cease to be, or cease to live, as cease to sin*: sin is by custom become as another nature to thee, which thou neither canst nor wilt lay aside, though thou knowest, *That if thou dost not lay it aside, God will lay thy soul aside for ever*; though thou knowest, “*That if sin and thy soul do not part, Christ and thy soul can never meet*,” if thou wilt make a trade of sin and cry out, “*Did not David sin thus, and Noah sin thus, and Peter sin thus? &c.*” 2 Pet. ii. 14. Prov. iv. 16. No, their hearts *turned aside to folly one day*, but thy heart turns aside to folly every day; and when fallen, they rise by repentance, and by the faith of a crucified Christ; but thou fallest, and hast neither strength nor will to rise, but wallowest in sin, and wilt eternally die in thy sins, unless the Lord be merciful to thy soul. Dost thou think, oh soul! this is good reasoning. “*Such a one tasted poison but once, and narrowly escaped; but I daily drink poison, yet I shall escape.*” Such is the mad reasoning of vain souls. David, Peter, &c. sinned once foully and fearfully, they tasted poison once, and were sick to death; but I taste it daily, and yet shall not taste of eternal death. Remember, sirs!—“*the day is at hand, when self-flatterers will be found self-deceivers, yea, self-murderers.*”

Rem. III. Seriously consider, that though God has not disinherited his people for their sins, yet he hath severely punished them for their sins.* David sins, and God breaks his bones for his sin, Ps. li. 8. “*Make me to hear joy and gladness,*

* Josephus relates, that not long after the Jews had crucified Christ on the cross, so many of them were condemned to be crucified, that there were not places enough for crosses, nor crosses enough for the bodies that were to be hung thereon.

that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. And because thou hast done this, the sword shall not depart from thy house, to the day of thy death. Though God will not utterly take from them his loving-kindness, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail, nor break his covenant, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his mouth, yet will he visit their transgression with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes," see *Ps. lxxxix.* 30—35. The scripture abounds with instances of this kind; this is a truth so well known, among all that know any thing of truth, that to cite more scriptures to prove it, would be to light a candle to see the sun at noon.

The Jews have a proverb, "That there is no punishment comes upon Israel, in which there is not one ounce of the golden calf." Meaning that, that was so great a sin, that in every plague God remembered it; it had influence in every trouble that befel them. Every man's heart may say to him in his sufferings, *I have been the cause of this.* God is most angry when he shews no anger. God keep me from this mercy, this kind of mercy is worse than all other kinds of misery.

One writing to a sick friend, hath this expression, "I account it a part of unhappiness not to know adversity, I judge you to be miserable, because you have not been miserable." It is a mercy that our affliction is not an execution, but a correction: he that has deserved hanging may be glad to escape with a whipping. God's corrections are our instructions, his lashes our lessons, his scourges our schoolmasters, his chastisements our advertisements; and to note this, both the Hebrews and Greeks, express chastening and teaching by one and the same word, because the latter is the true end of the former, according to that in the proverb, *Smart makes wit, and vexation gives understanding;*

whence Luther fitly calls affliction, *The Christian man's divinity*. So saith *Job*, (chap. xxxiii. 16—19.) God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not, in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man: he keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword. When Satan shall tell you of other men's sins to draw you to sin, think of their sufferings, to keep you from sin! Lay your hand upon your heart and say, "Oh my soul! if thou sinnest with David, thou must suffer with David," &c.

Rem. IV. Solemnly consider, that there are but two main ends why God records the falls of his saints,

And the one is, "To keep those from fainting, sinking, and despair, under the burden of their sins, who fall through weakness and infirmity."

And the other is, "That their falls may be as land-marks, to warn others that stand to take heed lest they fall."* It never entered into the heart of God to record his children's sins, that others might be encouraged to sin, but that they might be warned to look to their standings, and to hang the faster upon the skirts of Christ, and avoid all occasions and temptations, that may occasion them to fall, as others have fallen, when they have been left by Christ. There is nothing in the world that can so notoriously cross the grand end of God's recording the sins of his saints, than for any from thence to

* I have known a good man, said Bernard, who, when he had heard of any that had committed some notorious sin, was wont to say with himself, "He fell to-day, I may fall to-morrow."

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take encouragement to sin ; and whenever you find such a soul, you may write him Christless, graceless, a soul cast off by God, a soul that Satan has by the hand, and the eternal God alone knows whither he will lead him.

CHAPTER V.

The fifth Device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin, is,

By presenting God to the soul, as one made up of all mercy : Oh ! saith Satan, you need not make such a matter of sin, you need not be so fearful of it, nor so unwilling to commit it, for God is a God of mercy, a God full of mercy, a God that delights in mercy, a God that is ready to shew mercy, a God that is never weary of shewing mercy, a God more prone to pardon his people, than to punish them ; and therefore he will not take advantage against the soul ; and why then, saith Satan, should you make such a matter of sin ?—The Remedies against this device of Satan, are these :

Remedy I. Seriously consider, that it is the sorest judgment in the world, to be left to sin upon any pretence whatsoever. Oh ! unhappy man ; when God leaves you to yourself, and does not resist you in your sins ; Wo ! wo ! to him, at whose sins God doth wink :* when God lets the way to hell be a smooth and pleasant way, then it is hell on this side hell, and a dreadful sign of God's indignation against a man ; a token of his rejection, and that God does not intend good unto him : that is a sad word, “ Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone,”

* It is a human thing to fall into sin, a devilish to persevere therein, and an analytical, or supernatural, to rise from it.

he will not be admonished, he is incorrigible, he has made a match with mischief, and he shall have his belly full of it; he falls with open eyes, let him fall at his own peril. And that is a terrible saying, " So I gave them up unto their own hearts lusts, and they walked in their own counsels." *Ps. lxxxi. 12.* A soul given up to sin, is a soul ripe for hell, and posting to destruction. Ah, Lord! this mercy I humbly beg, that whatever thou givest me up to, thou wilt not give me up to the ways of my own heart; if thou wilt give me up to be afflicted, or tempted, or reproached, &c. I will patiently sit down and say, " It is the Lord, let him do with me what seemeth good in his own eyes." Do any thing with me, lay what burden thou wilt upon me; so thou dost not give me up to the ways of my own heart.

Rem. II. Solemnly consider, that God is as just as he is merciful; as the scriptures represent him to be a *very merciful God*, so they represent him to be a *very just God*; witness, *his casting the angels out of Heaven*, *2 Pet. ii. 4, 5, 6*, and " *his binding them in chains of darkness, till the judgment of the great day*, *his turning Adam out of Paradise*, *drowning of the old world*, *and raining fire from heaven upon Sodom*; witness all the losses, crosses, sicknesses, diseases, that are in the world; and *Tophet that is prepared of old*; witness, *his treasuring up of wrath against the day of wrath, unto the revelation of the just judgments of God*;" but above all, witness the pouring forth of all his wrath upon his dear Son, when he bore the sins of his people, and cried out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* *Mat. xxvii. 46.*

Rem. III. Seriously consider, that sins against mercy, will bring the greatest and sorest judgments down upon the heads and hearts of men. Mercy is

alpha, Justice is omega. David speaking of these attributes, placeth mercy in the fore-front, and justice in the rear-ward, saying; *My song shall be of mercy and judgment, Ps. ci. 1.* When mercy is despised, then justice takes the throne. God is like a prince, that sends not his army against rebels, before he has sent his pardon, and proclaimed it by a herald of arms: he first hangs out the white flag of mercy; if this win men over, they are happy for ever; but if they stand out, then God will put forth his red flag of justice and judgment; if the one be despised, the other shall be felt with a witness.*

See this exemplified in the Israelites; he loved them and chose them, when they were in their blood, and most unlovely; he multiplied them, not by means but by miracle; from seventy souls, they grew in a few years to six hundred thousand; the more they were oppressed, the more they prospered; like camomile, the more you tread it, the more you spread it; or to a palm tree, the more it is pressed, the further it spreadeth; or to fire, the more it is raked, the fiercer it burneth; their mercies came in upon them like Job's messengers, one upon the neck of another. "He put off their sackcloth, and girded them with gladness, and compassed them about with songs of deliverance; he carried them on the wings of eagles, he kept them as the apple of his eye," &c. But they abusing his mercy, became the greatest objects of his wrath: as I know not the man that can reckon up their mercies, so I know not the man that can sum up the miseries that are come upon them for their sins; for as our Saviour prophesied concerning Jerusalem, *That one stone*

* *God is slow to anger, but he recompenseth his slowness with grievousness of punishment.* If we abuse mercy to serve our lust, then, in Salvian's phrase, *God will rain hell out of heaven, rather than not visit such for sins.*

should not be left upon another : so it was fulfilled forty years after his ascension, by Vespasian the emperor, and his son Titus, who having besieged Jerusalem, the Jews were oppressed with a grievous famine, in which their food was old shoes, old leather, old hay, and the dung of beasts ; there died partly of the sword, and partly of the famine, eleven hundred thousand of the poorer sort ; two thousand in one night were embowelled, six thousand were burned in a porch of the temple, the whole city was sacked and burnt, and laid level to the ground, and ninety-seven thousand taken captives, and applied to base and miserable service, according to Eusebius and Josephus. And to this day, in all parts of the world, *are they not the off-scouring of the world?* None less beloved, and none more abhorred than they.

And so Capernaum, that was lifted up to heaven, was threatened to be brought down to hell. No souls fall so low into hell (if they fall) as those who by a hand of mercy are lifted up nearest to heaven.* You unthinking souls, that are so apt to abuse mercy, consider this, that in the gospel days, the plagues that God inflicts upon the despisers and abusers of mercy, are usually spiritual plagues ; as blindness of mind, hardness of heart, and a benumbed conscience, which are ten thousand times worse than any outward plagues that can befall you ; and therefore, though you may escape temporal judgments, yet you shall not escape spiritual judgments. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* saith the Apostle. Oh ! therefore, when-

* Men are therefore worse, because they ought to be better, and shall be deeper in hell because heaven was offered unto them, but they would not. *God turns aggravated unkindnesses, and men's offences are increased by their obligations.*

ever Satan shall present God to your soul, as one made up of all mercy that he may draw you to do wickedly, tell him, that sins against mercy will bring upon the world the greatest misery, and therefore whatever becomes of you, you will not sin against mercy, &c.

Rem. IV. Consider also, that though God's general mercy be over all his works, yet his special mercy is confined to those who are divinely qualified, so in *Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7.* "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." *Ex. xx. 6.* "And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." *Ps. xxv. 10.* "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant, and his testimonies." *Ps. xxxii. 10.* "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked, but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about." *Ps. xxxiii. 18.* "Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy." *Ps. ciii. 11.* "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him." *Ver. 17.* "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him." When Satan attempts to draw you to sin, by presenting God as a God of all mercy; oh! then reply, that though God's general mercy extend to all the works of his hand, yet his special mercy is confined to them that are divinely qualified, to them that love him and keep his commandments, that trust on him, that by hope hang upon him, and fear him; and that you must be such a one here, or else you can never be happy hereafter

you must partake of his special mercy, or else perish in everlasting misery, notwithstanding God's general mercy.

Rem. V. Consider likewise, that those who were once glorious on earth, and are now triumphing in heaven, looked upon the mercy of God as the most powerful argument to preserve them from, and to fence their souls against sin, and not as an encouragement thereto. *Ps. xxvi. 3, 4, 5, 6.* "For thy loving kindness is before mine eyes, and I have walked in thy truth ; I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers ; I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked." So Joseph strengthens himself against sin, from the remembrance of mercy. "How then can I," saith he, "do this great wickedness and sin against God?" *Gen. xxxix. 9.* He fixed his eye upon mercy, and therefore sin could not enter ; his soul being taken with mercy, was not moved with his mistress's impudence. Satan knocked oft at the door, but the sight of mercy would not suffer him to answer nor open. So Paul, "shall we continue in sin that grace may abound ? God forbid ! how shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein ?" *Rom. vi. 1, 2.* There is nothing in the world renders a man more unlike a saint, and more like Satan, than to argue from mercy to sinful liberty ; from Divine goodness to licentiousness ; this is the devil's logic. A man may as truly say, the sea burns, or fire cools, as that free grace and mercy should make a soul truly gracious to do wickedly. So the same Apostle, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." So St. John, *These things I write unto you, that ye sin not.* What was it that he wrote ?

He wrote, “ that we might have fellowship with the Father and his Son ; and that the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin ; and that if we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins ; and that if we do sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” These choice favours and mercies the Apostle holds forth as the best means to preserve and keep the soul from sin ; and if they do not, you may write the man void of Christ and grace, and undone for ever.

CHAPTER VI.

The sixth Device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin, is,

By persuading the soul, that the work of repentance is an easy work, and that therefore it need not make such a matter of sin. Why ? suppose you do sin, saith Satan, it is not so difficult a thing to return, and confess, and be sorrowful, and beg pardon, and cry, *Lord, have mercy upon me* ; and if you do but this, God will clear the score, and pardon your sins, and save your souls, &c. By this device Satan draws many to sin, and makes many millions of souls servants, or rather slaves to sin, &c.---The Remedies against this device of Satan, are these that follow :

Remedy I. Seriously consider, that repentance is a very difficult work ; a work that is above our power. There is no power below that which raised Christ from the dead, and made the world, that can break or turn the heart of a sinner ; you are as well able to melt adamant, as to melt your own heart ; to turn a flint into flesh, as to turn your own heart to the Lord ; to raise the dead and make a world, as to repent without grace. Repentance is a flower

that grows not in Nature's garden. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." *Jer.* xiii. 23. Repentance is a gift that comes down from above. Men are not born with repentance in their hearts, as they are born with tongues in their mouths. *Acts* v. 31. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." So in *2 Tim.* ii. 25. "In meekness instructing them that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." It is not in the power of any mortal to repent at his own pleasure. Some ignorant deluded souls vainly conceit that these five words, *Lord, have mercy upon me,* are efficacious enough to send them to heaven: but as many are ruined by buying a counterfeit jewel, so many are drawn into hell through a mistake in repentance; they rest in their repentance, though it be but the shadow of it, which caused one to say, *Repentance dammeth more than sin.*

Rem. II. Also consider, the nature of true repentance. Repentance is another thing than what vain men conceive.*

Repentance is sometimes taken in a more strict and narrow sense, for godly sorrow; sometimes it is taken in a large sense, for amendment of life. Repentance hath in it three things, viz. *The Act, The Subject, and The Terms.*

* The Hebrew word for repentance signifies to return, implying a going back from what a man had done. It denotes a turning or converting from one thing to another, from sin to God. The Greeks have two words by which they express the nature of repentance, one signifies to be careful, anxious, solicitous after a thing is done; the other after-wit, or after-wisdom, the mind's recovering of wisdom, or growing wiser after our folly.

1. The formal *act* of repentance is a changing and converting; it is often set forth in scripture by turning. Ephraim saith, "Turn thou me and I shall be turned;" and, "after that I was turned, I repented;" it is a turning from darkness to light.

2. The *subject* changed and converted, is the whole man: it is both the sinner's heart and life: first his heart, then his life; first his person, then his practice and conversation; *Wash ye, make you clean*, there is the change of their persons; *Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well*, there is the change of their practices: so *Cast away* (says Ezekiel) *all your transgressions whereby you have transgressed*, there is the change of the life, and *make you a new heart and a new spirit*, there is the change of the heart.

3. The *terms* of this change and conversion, from which, and to which, both heart and life must be changed are--**FROM ALL SIN TO GOD.** The heart must be changed from the state and power of sin, the life from the acts of sin, but both *unto* God; the heart to be under his power in a state of grace, the life to be under his rule in all new obedience, as the Apostle speaks, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the POWER of Satan unto God." So the prophet Isaiah saith, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord."* Thus much of the nature of the evangelical repentance. Now, tell me whether it is such an easy thing to repent, as Satan suggests. Besides what has been spoken I desire you will take notice, that repentance includes a turning

* True repentance is a thorough change both of mind and manners.—Luther.

from the most darling sin. Ephraim shall say, *What have I to do any more with idols?* Yea, it is a turning from all sin to God. *Ezek.* xviii. 30. "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one of you according to his ways; saith the Lord God: repent, and turn yourselves from your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin." Herod turned from many, but turned not from his Herodias, which was his ruin. Judas turned from all visible wickedness, yet he would not cast out that golden devil covetousness, and therefore was cast into the hottest place in hell. He that turns not from every sin, turns not aright from any sin. Every sin strikes at the honour, the being, and the glory of God; at the heart of Christ, the joy of the Spirit, and the peace of man's conscience; and therefore a soul truly penitent, hates all sin, conflicts with, and will labour to draw strength from a crucified Christ to overcome all. A true penitent knows neither father nor mother, neither right eye nor right hand, but will pluck out the one and cut off the other. Saul spared but one Agag, and that cost him his life and his kingdom. Besides, repentance is not only a turning *from* all sin, but also a turning *to* all good; to a love and a prizing of all good, and a following after it. *Ezek.* xviii. 21. "But if the wicked will turn from all the sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die;" that which is only a negative righteousness, and holiness, is not righteousness and holiness. David fulfilled all the will of God, and had respect unto all his commandments; and so had Zacharias and Elizabeth. It is not enough that the tree bears not evil fruit; but, "it must bring forth good fruit, else it must be cut down, and cast into the fire." So it

is not enough that you are not wicked, but you must be gracious and good, else Divine Justice will put the axe of Divine Vengeance to the root of your souls, and cut you off for ever. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewed down and cast into the fire." Besides, repentance includes a sense of the sinfulness of sin; how opposite and contrary it is to the blessed God: God is light, sin is darkness, God is life, sin is death; God is heaven, sin is hell; God is beauty, sin is deformity.

Also, true repentance includes a sense of the mischievousness of sin; that it cast angels out of heaven, Adam out of Paradise; that it laid the first corner stone in hell, and brought in all the curses, crosses, and miseries, that are in the world; and that it renders men liable to all temporal, spiritual, and eternal wrath; yea, it has left men without God, Christ, hope, or heaven.

Further, true repentance includes sorrow for sin, and contrition of heart; it breaks the heart with sighs and groans, because a loving God and Father is offended by sin, a blessed Saviour crucified afresh, and the sweet Comforter, the Spirit, grieved and vexed.

Again, repentance includes, not only a loathing of sin, but also a loathing of ourselves for it; as a man not only loathes poison, but also the very dish or vessel that has the smell of it, so a true penitent not only loathes his sin, but himself likewise, the vessel that smells of it. So *Ezek. xx. 43*. "And there shall ye remember your ways and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed." True repentance will dispose your hearts, not only to loathe your sins, but yourselves also.

Again, true repentance makes a man ashamed of his sin. "What fruit had ye in those things

whereof ye are (now) ashamed ?" saith the Apostle. So Ezekiel, " And thou shalt be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." When a true penitent soul sees his sins pardoned, the anger of God pacified, and Divine Justice satisfied ; then he sits down (and blushes, as the Hebrew hath it) as one ashamed. Yea, true repentance enables a man to cross his sinful self, and take a holy revenge upon sin, as you may see in St. Paul, the Jailor, Mary Magdalen, and Manasseh ; this the Apostle shews in *2 Cor. vii. 10, 11.* : " For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death : for behold this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you ; yea, what clearing of yourselves ; yea, what indignation ; yea, what fear ; yea, what vehement desire ; yea, what zeal ; yea, what revenge ?" Now, Sirs, sum up all these things together, and tell me whether it is such an easy thing to repent, as Satan would make you believe ; and I am confident your hearts will answer, that it is as hard a thing to repent, as to make a world, or raise the dead.

I shall conclude this second Remedy, with a worthy saying of a holy man. " Repentance (*said he*) strips us of all the garments of the old Adam, and leaves us not so much as a shirt behind."

Rem. III. Seriously consider, that repentance is a continued act, the word repent implies the continuation of it. True repentance inclines a man's heart to perform God's statutes always, even unto the end. A true penitent must go on from faith to faith, from strength to strength, he must never stand still nor turn back. Repentance is a grace, and must have its daily operation, as well as other

graces ; true repentance is a continued spring, where the waters of godly sorrow are always flowing. *My sins are ever before me.* A true penitent is often casting his eyes back to the days of his former vanity. *I was a blasphemer ; and a persecutor, and injurious,* says the Apostle. Repentance is a continued act of turning, a repentance never to be repented of, a turning never to turn again to folly. A true penitent can as easily content himself with one act of faith, or one act of love, as he can with one act of repentance.

Rem. IV. Solemnly consider, that if the work of repentance were such an easy work as Satan would make it to be, then certainly so many would not lie roaring and crying out (of wrath and eternal ruin) under the horrors and terrors of conscience, for not repenting ; yea, doubtless, so many millions would not go to hell for not repenting, if it were such an easy thing to repent. Ah ! do not poor souls under horror of conscience, cry out and say, Were all this world a lump of gold, and in our hands to dispose of, we would give it for the least dram of true repentance ? And will you say it is an easy thing to repent, when a poor sinner, whose conscience is awakened, shall judge the exchange of all the world, for the least dram of repentance, to be the happiest exchange he could make ? Then run not the hazard of losing God, Christ, heaven, and thy soul for ever, by hearkening to this Device of Satan, viz. *That it is an easy thing to repent, &c.* If it be so easy, why then do wicked men's hearts rise against them that press the doctrine of repentance in the sweetest way, and by the strongest arguments the scripture affords ? And why do they kill two at once ? The faithful labourer's name, and their own souls, by their wicked words and works, because they are put upon repenting, which Satan

tells is so easy a thing : surely, were repentance so easy, wicked men would not be so much enraged when that doctrine is, by evangelical considerations, pressed upon them.

Rem. V. Consider further, that he who now tempts you to sin, telling you that repentance is easy, will, ere long, to bring you to despair, and for ever to destroy your soul, represent repentance as the most difficult and hardest work in the world : and to this purpose he will set your sins in order before you, and make them say, *We are thine, and we must follow thee.** Now Satan will tempt the soul to look up, and see God angry ; and to look inward, and see conscience accusing and condemning ; and to look downwards, and see hell's mouth open to receive the impenitent soul ; and all this to render the work of repentance impossible. What ! saith Satan, do you think that can be easy which the whole power of grace cannot conquer, while we are in this world ? Is it easy, saith Satan, to turn from some outward act of sin, to which you have been addicted ? Do you not remember, that you have often complained against such and such particular sins, and resolved to leave them, and yet to this hour you have not, you cannot ? What will it then be to turn from every sin ? Yea, to mortify and cut off those sins, those darling lusts, that are as joints and members, that are as right hands and right eyes ? Have you not loved your sins above your Saviour ? Have you not preferred earth before

* Peda tells us of a certain great man that was admonished in his sickness to repent, who answered, That he would not repent yet, for if he should recover, his companions would laugh at him ; but growing worse, his friends pressed him again to repent, but then he told them it was too late. "For now" (said he) "I am judged and condemned."

heaven ? Have you not all along neglected the means of grace ? and despised the exhibitions of grace ? and vexed the spirit of grace ? There would be no end, if I should set before you the infinite evils you have committed, and the innumerable good services you have omitted, and the frequent checks of your own conscience that you have contemned ; and therefore you may well conclude, you cannot, nor ever shall repent. Now, saith Satan, do but consider the number, the greatness, the foulness, the heinousness, and the circumstances of your sins, and you will easily see that those sins that you thought to be but mole-hills, are indeed mountains ; and is it not now in vain to repent of them ? Surely, saith Satan, if you should seek repentance and grace with tears, as Esau, you shall not find it ; your glass is out, your sun is set, the door of mercy is shut, the golden sceptre is taken in, and now you that have despised mercy, shall be for ever destroyed by justice ;* for such a wretch as you are to attempt repentance, is to attempt a thing impossible ; it is impossible that you, who in all your life could never conquer one sin, should master such a number of sins, which are so near and dear, and so profitable to you, that have been old acquaintance and companions ; have you not often purposed, promised, vowed, and resolved, to enter upon the practice of repentance, but to this day could never attain it : Surely it is in vain to strive against the stream, where it is so impossible to overcome ; you are lost for ever ; to hell you must, to hell you shall go. Ah, souls ! he that now tempts you to sin, by suggesting to you the

* Repentance is a work that must be timely done, or men are utterly undone for ever. " Either to repentance or to destruction."

easiness of repentance, will, at last, prompt you to despair, and represent repentance as the hardest work in the world; a work as far above man, as heaven is above hell, as light is above darkness. Oh! that you were wise, to break off your sins by timely repentance.

CHAPTER VII.

Now the Seventh Device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin, is,

By making the soul bold to venture upon the occasions of sin. Saith Satan, you may walk by the harlot's door, though you will not go into the harlot's bed; you may sit and sip with the drunkard, if you will not be drunk with him; you may look upon Jezebel's beauty, and you may play and toy with Delilah, though you may not commit wickedness with the one nor the other; you may with Achan handle the golden wedge, though you do not steal it, &c.—The Remedies against this Device of the devil are these:

Remedy I. Solemnly dwell upon those scriptures that expressly command us to avoid the occasions of sin, and the least appearance of evil. 1 Thess. v. 22. *Abstain from all appearance of evil;* whatsoever is heterodox, unsound, and unsavoury, shun it, as you would a serpent in your way, or poison in your meat.

When God had commanded the Jews to abstain from swine's flesh, they would not so much as name it, but in their common talk would call a sow another thing. To abstain from all appearance of evil, is to do nothing wherein sin appears, or which hath a shadow of it. Bernard's gloss here is beautiful, “Whatever is of an ill shew, or of ill re-

report, that we may neither wound conscience, nor lose credit :" we must shun, and be shy of the very shadow of sin, if we love either our credit abroad, or our comfort at home.

It was good counsel that Livia gave her husband Augustus; " It behoves you not only to do no wrong, but not to seem to do so," &c. So Jude 23. " And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garments spotted by the flesh." It is a phrase taken from legal uncleanness, which was contracted by touching the houses, the vessels, the garments of unclean persons. Under the law, men might not touch an unclean cloth, nor would God accept of a spotted peace-offering. So we must not only hate, and avoid gross sins, but every thing that may carry a savour, or suspicion of sin ; we must abhor the very signs and tokens of it. So in Prov. v. 8. *Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house.* He that would not be burnt, must dread the fire ; he that would not hear the bell, must not meddle with the rope. One said, " As oft as I have been among vain men, I returned home less a man than I was before." To venture upon the occasion of sin, and then to pray, *lead us not into temptation,* is all one as to thrust your finger into the fire, and then to pray that it may not be burnt. So in Prov. iv. 14, 15. " Enter not in the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men ; avoid it, and pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." This triple gradation of Solomon, sheweth, with a great emphasis, how necessary it is for men to flee from all appearance of sin, as the seaman shuns sands and shelves, and as men shun those that have the plague-sores running upon them : as weeds endanger the corn, and bad humours the blood, or an infected house the

neighbourhood; so does the company of the bad endanger those that are good, and exposes them to punishment.

Rem. II. Solemnly consider, that ordinarily there is no conquest over sin, unless the soul turns from the occasion of it; it is impossible for that man to get the conquest of sin, *who plays and sports with the occasions of it.* God will not remove the temptation, *except you turn from the occasion.* It is a just and righteous thing with God, that he should fall into the pit, that will adventure to dance upon the brink of it, "and that he should be a slave of sin, that will not flee from the occasions of sin."* As long as there is fuel in our hearts for temptation, we cannot be secure: he that has gun-powder about him, had need keep far off from sparks; to rush upon the occasions of sin, is "to tempt ourselves, and also to tempt Satan to tempt our souls;" it is very rare that any soul plays with the occasions of sin, *but that soul is ensnared by it;* it is seldom that God keeps that soul from the acts of sin, *that will not keep off from the occasions of sin;* he that adventures upon the occasions of sin, "is as he that would quench the fire with oil, which is a fuel to maintain and increase it." Ah souls! remember how frequently you have been overcome by sin, when you have boldly gone upon the occasions of it; look back, souls, to the days of your vanity, wherein you have been as easily conquered as tempted, vanquished as assaulted, when you have played with the occasions of sin; as you would for the future be kept from sin, and be made victorious over it, oh, *flee from the occasions of sin.*

* The fable saith, that the butterfly asked the owl how she should deal with the fire, which had singed her wings, who counselled her not to behold so much as its smoke.

Rem. III. Against this Device of Satan, seriously consider, that other precious saints that were once glorious on earth, and are now triumphing in heaven, have turned from the occasions of sin, as from hell itself; as you may see in Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 10. "And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her." Joseph was famous for all the four cardinal virtues, if ever any were; in this one temptation you may see his fortitude, justice, temperance, and prudence, in that he shuns the occasion, (for he would not so much as be with her.) And such is man, "that in temptation he wants but a tap to give vent to the corruption."

The Nazarites were not only forbid to drink wine, but not to taste a grape, nor the husk of a grape. A bird, while aloft, is safe, but when she comes near the snare, she is in danger; shunning the occasions of sin, renders man most like the best of men: a soul eminently gracious, dares not come near the train, though he be far off the blow. So Job xxxi. 1. "I made a covenant with mine eyes, why then should I think upon a maid?"* I set a watch at the entrance of my senses, that my soul might not by them be infected nor endangered. The eye is the window of the soul, and if that be always open, the soul will smart for it. "A man should not look intently upon that which he may not love entirely." It is best and safest to have the eye always fixed upon the highest and noblest objects; as the mariner's eye is fixed upon the star, when his hand is on the stern. So David, when he

* I cut a covenant. "In making covenants, it was a custom among the Jews to cut some beast or other in pieces, and so walk between the pieces, to signify that they desired God to destroy them that should break the covenant."

was himself, shuns the occasion of sin, *Ps. xxvi. 4, 5.* “ I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemlers ; I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked.”

Stories speak of some that could not sleep when they thought of the trophies of other worthies who went before them ; the highest and choicest examples are to some, and should be to all, very quickening and provoking ; and oh ! that the examples of those worthy saints, David, Joseph, and Job, might prevail with all your souls to shun and avoid the occasions of sin ; every one should strive to be like to them in grace, whom they desire to be equal with in glory. He that shooteth at the sun, though he be far short, will shoot higher than he that aimeth at a shrub : it is best (and it manifests much of Christ within) to eye the highest and most worthy examples.

Rem. IV. Consider also, that to avoid the occasions of sin, “ is an evidence of grace, and that which lifts up a man above most other men in the world.” What a man is in temptation, and when sinful occasions present themselves to the soul, that he is indeed ; this evidences both the truth and the strength of grace ; when with Lot, a man can be chaste in Sodom, and with Timothy can live temperate in Asia, among the luxurious Ephesiāns ; and with Job can walk uprightly in the land of Uz, where the people were profane in their lives, and superstitious in their worship ; and with Daniel be holy in Babylon ; and with Abraham be righteous in Chaldea ; and with Nehemiah, zealous in Shusan, &c. Many a wicked man is full of sinful corruption, but shews it not for want of occasion : but that man is surely good, “ who in his life will not be bad, though tempted by occasions ;” a Christless soul is so far from refusing occasions

when they come in his way, that he looks and longs after them, and rather than go without them, he will buy them with love or money, or the loss of his soul ; nothing but grace can defend a man against the occasions of sin, when he is strongly tempted. Therefore, " as you would cherish a precious evidence in your own bosoms, of the truth and strength of your graces, shun all sinful occasions.

The eighth Device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin, is,

By representing to the soul the outward mercies ungodly men enjoy, and the outward miseries they are freed from, while they walk in the ways of sin. Saith Satan, dost thou see, O soul ! the many mercies that such persons enjoy, who walk in those very ways that thy soul startles to think of, and the many crosses they are delivered from, even such as make other men (who dare not walk in such ways) spend their days sighing and mourning ; and therefore, saith Satan, if thou wilt be freed from the dark night of adversity, and enjoy the sun-shine of prosperity, thou must walk in their ways.*

By this stratagem the devil took those in Jer. xliv. 16, 17, 18. " As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee ; but we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings, and our princes in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem : for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well

* It was a weighty saying of Seneca, " There is no one more unhappy than he who never felt adversity." .

and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword, and by the famine."* This is the language of a world of ignorant, profane, and superstitious persons, that would have made them a captain to return to bondage, yea, to that bondage that is worse than that which the Israelites groaned under.---Now the Remedies against this Device of Satan, are these that follow :

Remedy I. Solemnly consider, that no man knows how the heart of God is inclined, by looking at his hand ; his hand of mercy may be towards a man, when his heart may be against him, as you may see in Saul and others.† And the hand of God may be set against a man, when his heart is dearly set upon him, as you may see in Job and Ephraim ; the hand of God was sorely set against them, and yet the heart and bowels of God were strongly working towards them : "no man knoweth either love or hatred by outward mercy or misery ; for all things come alike to all, to the righteous and the unrighteous, to the good and to the bad, to the clean and to the unclean," &c. The sun of prosperity shines as well upon brambles as fruit-trees ; the snow and hail of adversity lights upon the best garden, as well as dunghills, or the wild

* Some of the Heathens would be as wicked as their gods were, counting it as a dishonour to their god to be unlike him.—*Lactantius.*

† Tully judged the Jew's religion to be naught, because they were so often overcome, impoverished, and afflicted ; and the religion of Rome to be right, because the Romans prospered and became lords of the world ; and, yet, though the Romans had his hand, yet the Jews had his heart ; for they were dearly beloved, though sorely afflicted.

waste. Ahab's and Josiah's ends concur in the very circumstances. Saul and Jonathan, though different in their natures, deserts, and deportments, yet in their deaths they were not divided. Health, wealth, honour, &c. crosses, sicknesses, losses, &c. are cast upon good and bad men promiscuously. Moses dies in the wilderness as well as those that murmured. Nabal is rich as well as Abraham; Ahitophel wise as well as Solomon; and Doeg honoured by Saul, as well as Joseph was by Pharaoh. Usually the worst of men have most of these outward things: and the best of men have least of earth, though most of heaven.

Rem. H. Consider likewise, there is nothing that does so provoke God to be angry, as when men take encouragement from God's goodness and mercy to do wickedly. This you may see by the wrath that fell upon the old world, and by God's raining fire from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah. This is clear in *Jer.* xliv. from ver. 20. to ver. 28. the words are worthy your best meditation; oh, that they were engraven in your hearts, and constant in all your thoughts! Though they are too large for me to transcribe them, yet they are not too large for me to remember them. To argue from mercy to sinful liberty, is the devil's logic, and such logicians ever walk as upon a mine of gunpowder, ready to be blown up; such persons can never avert or avoid the wrath of God.* It is the highest wickedness for a man to be very bad, because God is very good: *a worse spirit than this is not in hell.* Ah, Lord, does not wrath, yea, the greatest wrath,

* Such souls make God one that will not do as he saith, but they shall find God to be as severe in punishing, as he is to others gracious in pardoning. God turns aggravated unkindness, and our guilt is increased by our obligations.

lie at this man's door ? Are not the strongest chains of darkness prepared for such a soul ? To sin against mercy is to sin against humanity ; it is bestial, nay, it is worse. To render good for evil is divine, to render good for good is human ; to render evil for evil is brutish, but to render evil for good is devilish ; and from this evil deliver my soul, O God.

Rem. III. Solemnly consider, that there is no greater misery in this life, than not to be in misery ; no greater affliction, than not to be afflicted ; wo ! wo ! to that soul that God will not spend a rod upon ; this is the most awful stroke when God refuses to strike ! “ **EPHRAIM** is joined to idols ; **LET HIM ALONE.** Why should you be smitten any more ? You will revolt more and more.” When the physician gives over the patient, you say, Ring his knell, the man is dead : so when God gives up a soul to sin without controul, you may truly say, “ This soul is lost, you may ring his knell, for he is twice dead, and plucked up by the roots.” Freedom from punishment is the mother of security, the step-mother of virtue, the poison of religion, the moth of holiness, and the introducer of wickedness : “ Religion brought forth riches, and the daughter soon devoured the mother,” said Augustine. “ Nothing (said one) seems more unhappy to me, than he to whom no adversity hath happened.” Outward mercies oft-times prove a snare to our souls. *I lay a stumbling-block,* Ezek. iii. 20. Vateblu’s note there is, *I will prosper him in all things, and not by affliction restrain him from sin.* Prosperity hath been a stumbling-block, at which millions have stumbled and fallen, and destroyed their souls for ever.

Rem. IV. Seriously consider, that the wants of wicked men, under all their outward mercy and

freedom from adversity, is far greater than all their outward enjoyments. They have many mercies, yet they want more than they enjoy ; the mercies which they enjoy, are nothing to the mercies they want. It is true, they have honours and riches, and pleasures, and friends, and are mighty in power ; their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes ; " Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them ; they send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ ; they spend their days in wealth, their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart can wish ; and they have no bands in their death, but their strength is firm : they are not in trouble as other men," as David and Job speak ; yet all this is nothing to what they want. Men that enjoy all worldly comforts may truly say, " All human comforts are but desolations." They want interest in God, Christ, the Spirit, the promises, the covenant of grace, and everlasting glory ; they want acceptance and reconciliation with God : they want righteousness, justification, sanctification, adoption, and redemption ; they want the pardon of sin, power against sin, freedom from the dominion of sin ; they want that favour that is better than life, that joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, that peace that passes understanding, and that grace, the least spark of which is more worth than heaven and earth ; they want a house that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, those riches that perish not, the glory that fadeth not, and that kingdom that can never be moved. Wicked men are the most needy in the world, yea, they want those two things that would render their mercies sweet, viz. *The blessing of God, and*

content with their condition, and without which, their heaven is but misery on this side of hell. When their hearts are lifted up, and grown big upon the thoughts of their abundance, if conscience do but put in a word, and say, It is true, here is this and that outward mercy ; oh ! but where is an interest in Christ ? The favour of God ? The comforts of the Holy Ghost ? Where are thy evidences for heaven, &c. This word from conscience makes the man's countenance to change, his thoughts are troubled, his heart is amazed, and all his mercies on the right hand, and left, are as dead and withered. Ah ! were but the eyes of wicked men open to see their wants in their abundance, they would cry out, and say as Absalom did, " What are all these to me, so long as I cannot see the king's face ? " What is honour, and riches, and the favour of creatures, so long as I want the favour of God, the pardon of my sins, an interest in Christ, and the hopes of glory. O Lord, give me these or I die, give me these, or I shall eternally die.

Rem. V. Solemnly consider, that outward things are not as they seem, and are esteemed : they have indeed a glorious outside, but if you view their insides, you will easily find that they fill the head full of cares, and the heart full of fears ; what if the fire should consume one part of my estate, and the sea should be a grave to swallow up another ? What if my servants should be unfaithful abroad, and my children should be deceitful at home ? Ah ! the secret fretting, vexing, and gnawing, that daily, yea, hourly, attends those men's souls, whose hands are full of worldly goods.

It was a good speech of an emperor, " You (said he) gaze on my purple robe and golden crown ; but did you know what cares are under it, you would not take it up from the ground to have it."

It was a true saying of Augustine on the 26th Psalm, " Many are miserable by loving hurtful things ; but they are more miserable by having them." It is not what men enjoy, but the principle from whence it comes, that makes them happy. Much of these outward things usually cause great distraction, great vexation, and great condemnation at last, to the possessors of them. If God give them in his wrath, and do not sanctify them in his love, they will at last be witnesses against a man, racks to torture and torment him, and millstones for ever to sink him, in that day when God shall call men to an account, not for the use, but for the abuse of mercy.

Rem. VI. Consider the end and design of God, in heaping mercies upon the heads of the wicked, and in giving them rest and quiet from those sorrows and sufferings that others sigh under. David in Ps. lxxiii. 17, 18, 19, 20. shews the end and design of God in this ; saith he, " When I went into the sanctuary of God, then I understood their end : surely thou didst set them in slippery places, thou castedst them into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment ? They are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image." So in Ps. xcii. 7. " When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever." God's setting them up, is but in order to his casting them down ; his raising them high, is but in order to his bringing them low. Ex. ix. 16. " And in very deed, for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." I have constituted and set thee up as a but-mark, that I may

let fly at thee, plague upon plague, till I have beaten the very breath out of thy body, and my feet upon the neck of all thy pride, power, pomp, and glory. Ah, Sirs ! what man in his wits would be lifted up, that he might be cast down ; would be set higher than others, when it is but in order to reduce him lower than others ? There is not a wicked man in the world that is set up with Lucifer, as high as heaven, but shall with Lucifer, be brought down as low as hell. Canst thou think seriously of this, O soul ! and not say, O Lord, I humbly crave I may be little in this world, that I may be great in another world ; and low here, that I may be high for ever hereafter.* Let me be low, fed low, and live low, so I may live with thee for ever ; let me now be clothed with rags, so thou wilt clothe me at last with thy robes ; let me now be set upon a dunghill, so I may at last be advanced to sit with thee upon thy throne. Lord, make me rather gracious than great, inwardly holy rather than outwardly happy ; and turn me into my first nothing, yea, make me worse than nothing, rather than set me up for a time, that thou mayest bring me low for ever.

Rem. VII. Consider once more, that God doth often most plague and punish those, whom others think he doth most spare and love ; that is, God plagues and punishes them most with spiritual judgments, (which are the greatest, the sorest, and the heaviest) whom he least punishes with temporal punishments ; there are no men on earth so internally plagued, as those that meet with least external plagues. Ps. lxxxi. 12. lxxxviii. 26 to 31, cvi. 15. "He gave them their request, but sent

* "Grant us Lord that we may so partake of temporal felicity, that we may not lose eternal."—*Berne.*

leanness into their soul." It is a heavy plague to have a fat body and a lean soul ! a house full of gold and a heart full of sin. Oh ! the blindness of mind, the hardness of heart, the searedness of conscience, that those souls are given up to, who, in the eye of the world, are reputed the most happy men, because they are not outwardly afflicted and plagued as other men. Ah, souls ! it were better that all the temporal plagues that ever befel the children of men since the fall of Adam, should at once meet you, than that you should be given to the least spiritual plague, to the least measure of spiritual blindness, or spiritual hardness of heart. Nothing will better or move that man, who is given up to spiritual judgment; let God smile or frown, stroke or strike, cut or kill, he minds nor regards it not ; let life or death, heaven or hell, be set before him, they stir him not ; he is mad upon his sin, and God is fully set to do justice upon his soul :* this man's preservation is but a reservation unto a greater condemnation ; this man can set no bounds to himself, he is become a brat of fathomless perdition, he hath guilt in his bosom, and vengeance at his back, wherever he goes ; neither ministry nor misery, neither miracle, nor mercy, can mollify his heart, and if this soul be not in misery on this side hell, who is ? who is ?

Rem. VIII. Lastly, dwell more upon that strict account that vain men must make for all the good that they enjoy. In the last day shall men give an account "of good things committed unto them, of good things neglected by them, of evil committed by them, and of evil suffered by them." Ah ! did men dwell more upon that account that

* "It is better to have a sore, than a seared conscience. It is better to have no heart than a hard heart ; no mind than a blind mind."

they must ere long give for all the mercies they have enjoyed, and for all the favours they have abused, and for all the sins they have committed, it would make their hearts tremble, and their lips quiver, and rottenness to enter into their bones ; it would cause their souls to cry out, and say, Oh ! that our mercies had been fewer and less, that our account might have been easier, and our torment and misery (for our abuse of so great mercy) not greater than we are able to bear. O, cursed be the day wherein the crown of honour was set upon our heads, and the treasures of this world cast into our laps ; O, cursed be the day wherein the sun of prosperity shone so strong upon us, and this flattering world smiled so much upon us as to occasion us to forget God, to slight Jesus Christ, to neglect our souls, and to put far from us the day of our account.

Philip the third of Spain, whose life was free from gross evils, professed " That he would rather lose all his kingdom, than offend God willingly :" yet being in the agony of death, and considering more particularly of the account he was to give to God, fear struck into him, and these words came from him : " Oh ! would to God I had never reigned, Oh that those years that I have spent in my kingdom, I had lived a solitary life in the wilderness ! Oh that I had lived a solitary life with God ! How much more securely should I now have died ? How much more confidently should I have gone to the throne of God ? What doth all my glory profit me, but that I have so much the more torment in my death ? " God keeps an exact account of every penny that is laid out upon him and his, and in this the day of account men shall know and feel, though now they wink, and will not understand. The sleeping of vengeance causeth

the over-flowing of sin, and the over-flowing of sin causeth the awaking of vengeance; abused mercy will certainly turn into fury; God's forbearance is no acquittance; the day is at hand, when he will pay wicked men for their abuse of old and new mercies; if he seem to be slow, yet he is sure; he hath leaden heels, but iron hands; the farther he fetcheth his blow, or draweth his arrow, the deeper he will wound in the day of vengeance. Men's actions are all in print in heaven, and God will in the day of accounts read them aloud in the ears of all the world, that they may all say Amen to that righteous sentence, that he shall pass upon all despisers and abusers of mercy.

CHAPTER VIII.

The ninth Device of Satan to draw the soul to sin, is,

By presenting to the soul the crosses, losses, reproaches, sorrows, and sufferings that daily attend those that walk in the ways of holiness. Saith Satan, you see there are none in the world who are so deeply afflicted, as those who walk more circumspectly and holily than their neighbours; they are a by-word at home, and a reproach abroad; their miseries come upon them like Job's messengers, one upon the back of another, and there is no end of their sorrows and troubles; therefore, saith Satan, you had better walk in ways that are less troublesome and affliction, though they be more sinful; for who but a madman would spend his days in sorrow and affliction, when it may be prevented by walking in the ways that I set before him?—Now the Remedies against this Device of Satan, are these:

Remedy I. Against this Device of Satan consider,

That all the afflictions that attend the people of God, are such as shall turn to their profit, and glorious advantage; they *shall hereby discover* that filthiness and vileness in sin, that they have never seen before.

It was a speech of a German divine, in his sickness, “In this disease I have learned how great God is, and what the evil of sin is, I never knew to what purpose God was before, nor what sin meant, till now.” Afflictions are a crystal glass, wherein the soul hath the clearest sight of the ugly face of sin: in this glass it comes to see sin to be but a bitter sweet: and, to see sin not only to be an evil, but to be the greatest evil in the world, to be an evil far worse than hell itself. *Isa. i. 15. and xxvii. 8, 9.*

Again, they shall contribute to the mortifying and clearing away of their sins. Afflictions are God’s furnace,* by which he cleanses his people from their dross; and makes their virtue shine; it is a portion to carry away ill humours. Aloes kill worms; colds and frosts destroy vermin; so do afflictions the corruptions that are in our hearts. The Jews, under all the prophets’ thunderings, retained their idols, but after their Babylonish captivity, it is observed, there have been no idols found amongst them.

Again, afflictions are sweet preservatives to keep the saints from sin; as Job spake, *Job xxxiv. 31, 32.* “Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.” Once I have spoken foolishly, yea, twice, but I will do so no

* In times of peace our armour is rusty, in time of war it is bright.

more. 'The burnt child dreads the fire; ah! saith the soul under the rod, sin is a bitter thing indeed, and for the future, I intend by the strength of Christ, not to buy repentance at so dear a rate.'

The Rabbins to deter their scholars from sin, were wont to tell them, That sin made God's head ache; and saints under the rod have found by woful experience, that sin makes not only their heads but their hearts ache also.

Augustine by wandering out of his way, escaped one who lay in wait to do him mischief. If afflictions did not put us out of our way, we should many times meet with some sin or other that would hurt our precious souls.

Again, they will make the saints more fruitful in holiness; *Heb. xii. 10, 11.* "But he afflicts us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." The flowers smell sweetest after a shower; vines are said to bear the better for bleeding; the walnut tree to be most fruitful, when most beaten; so saints spring and thrive most internally, when they are most externally afflicted: Afflictions are called by some the mother of virtue; Manasseh's chain was more profitable to him, than his crown, —Luther could not understand some scriptures, till he was in affliction. *God's house of correction is his school of instruction.* All the stones that came about Stephen's ears, did but drive him closer to Christ the corner-stone. The rising waves did but lift Noah's ark nearer to heaven. Afflictions lift up the soul to more clear, and full enjoyments of God. *Hos. ii. 14.* "Behold, I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her," (or rather as the Hebrew hath it) "I will earnestly

* Salt brine preserves from putrefaction; so do afflictions preserve the saints from sin.

or vehemently speak to her heart." God makes afflictions inlets to the soul's more sweet and full enjoyment of his blessed self. When was it that Stephen saw the heavens open, and Christ standing at the right hand of God? When the stones were about his ears, and there was but a short step between him and eternity. And when did God appear in his glory to Jacob? but in the day of his troubles, when the stones were his pillow, the ground his bed, the hedges his curtains, and the heavens his canopy, Then he saw the angels of God ascending and descending in their glittering robes. Saints by their afflictions that befal them, gain more experience of the power of God supporting, of his wisdom directing, of his grace refreshing and cheering, and of his goodness quieting and quickening of them, to greater love to, and a greater delight in holiness, and to more eager pursuit after it.

I have read of a fountain, that at noon-day is cold, and at midnight grows warm; so many a precious saint is cold God-ward and heaven-ward, in the day of prosperity, who grows warm in all these respects, in the night of adversity.

Again, afflictions serve to keep the hearts of the saints humble and tender, *Lam. iii. 19, 20.* "Remembering my affliction, and my misery, the wormwood and the gall; my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled, *or* bowed down in me." So David, when he was under the rod, could say, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it."

I have read of one, who when any thing fell out prosperously, would read over the lamentations of Jeremiah, to keep his heart humble and low. Prosperity doth not more contribute to elate the soul, than adversity doth to bow it down; this, saints

find by experience, and therefore they kiss and embrace the cross, as others do the world's crown.

Again, they bring saints nearer to God, and make them more importunate, and earnest in prayer with God. *Ps. cxix. 67, 71.* "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." *Hos. v. 14, 15.* "I will be to Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear and go away, I will take away, and none shall rescue him. I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early." And so they did. *Chap. vi. 1, 2.* "Come," (say they) "and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."* So when God had hedged up their way with thorns, then they said, "we will go and return to our first husband, for then it was better with us than now." Ah, the joy, peace, comfort, delight, and content, that attended us, when we lived in close conversation with God, incline us to return to God again. "We will return to our first husband, for then it was better with us than now."

Though a saint may at first stand out a little, yet when he is reminded, afflictions are to carry him nearer to God, he yields and kisses the rod.

Again, afflictions revive and recover decayed graces, they inflame love that is grown cold, they quicken that faith that is decaying, they put life

* The more precious odours, and the purest spices, are beaten and bruised, the sweetest scent and savour they send abroad. So do saints when they are afflicted. *Hos. ii. 7.*

into those hopes that are withering, and spirits into those joys and comforts that are languishing. Most men are like a top, that will not go unless you whip it; and the more you whip it, the better it goes. You know how to apply it. They that are in adversity, saith Luther, do best understand the scriptures; but those that are in prosperity, read them carelessly. Bees are killed with honey, but quickened with vinegar. The honey of prosperity kills our graces, but the vinegar of adversity quickens our graces. Adversity abases the lowness of the world that might entice us; it abates the lust of the flesh within, which might incite us to folly and vanity. Now suppose afflictions and troubles attend the ways of holiness, yet seeing that they all work for the great profit and singular advantage of the saints, let no person be so mad as to leave an afflicted way of holiness, to walk in a smooth path of wickedness.

Rem. II. Consider, that all the afflictions which befall the saints, only reach their inferior part; they neither reach, nor hurt their noble, their best part; all the arrows stick in a target, they reach not the conscience. "And who shall harm you if you be followers of that which is good?" (saith the apostle.) That is, they may many ways afflict you, but they shall never harm you.

It was a speech of a Heathen, when by a tyrant he was commanded to be put in a mortar, and to be beaten to pieces with an iron pestle, he cried out to his persecutors, "you do but beat the vessel, the case, the husk of Anaxarchus, you do not beat me. His body was to him but as a case, a husk, ne counted his soul himself, which they could not reach. You have wisdom to apply it.

Socrates said of his enemies, "They may kill me, but they cannot hurt me." So afflictions may

kill us, but they cannot hurt us ; they may take away my life, but they cannot take away my God, my Christ, my crown.

Rem. III. Consider also, that the afflictions that attend the saints in the ways of holiness are but short and momentary. “Sorrow may abide for a night, but joy comes in the morning ;” this short storm will end in an everlasting calm; this short night will end in a glorious day, that shall never have an end. There are none of God’s afflicted ones that have not their “intermissions, respites, and breathings,” whilst under their short and momentary afflictions. When God’s hand is on thy back, let thy hand be on thy mouth ; for though the affliction be sharp, it will be but short. It is but a very short time between grace and glory, between our title to the crown, and our wearing it, between our right to the heavenly inheritance, and our possession. “A thousand years with the Lord, are but as one day !” What is our life but a shadow, a bubble, a flower, a post, a span, a dream ? &c. Yea, so small a time doth the hand of the Lord rest upon us, that Luther cannot get diminutives enough to extenuate it ; for he calls it a *very little, little cross* that we bear. The prophet, in *Isa. xxvi. 20.* saith the *indignation* doth not pass, but *over pass*. The sharpness, shortness, and suddenness of it, is set forth by the travail of a woman, *John xvi. 21.* And that is a sweet scripture, *Heb. x. 36, 37.* “For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.”

A LITTLE, LITTLE, LITTLE WHILE.

When Athanasius’ friends came to bewail him, because of his misery and banishment, he said, “it is but a little cloud, and will quickly be gone. It

will be but as a day before God will give his afflicted ones beauty for ashes, the oil of gladness for the spirit of heaviness ;” before he will turn all your sighing into singing, all your lamentations into consolations, your sackcloth into silk, ashes into ointments, and your fasts into everlasting feasts, &c.

Rem. IV. Consider further, that the afflictions which befall the saints are such, as proceed from God’s dearest love. “ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” Austin asketh, “ If he were beloved how came he to be sick ? ” So are wicked men apt to say, because they know not that corrections are pledges of our adoption, and badges of our sonship. God had one Son without sin, but none without sorrow. Saints, saith God, think not that I hate you, because I thus chide you ; he that escapes reprobation, may suspect his adoption. A gracious soul may look through the darkest cloud, and see a God smiling on him. We must look through the anger of his correction, to the sweetness of his countenance ; as by a rainbow we see the beautiful image of the sun’s light, in the midst of a dark and watery cloud.

When Munster lay sick, and his friends asked him how he did, and how he felt himself, he pointed to his sores and ulcers, (whereof he was full) and said, “ These are God’s gems and jewels, wherewith he decketh his best friends, and to me they are more precious than all the gold and silver in the world.” A soul at first conversion is but roughcast ; but God by afflictions doth square and fit and fashion it for that glory above, which shews they flow from precious love ; therefore the afflictions that attend the people of God are no bar to holiness, nor any motive to draw them to ways of wickedness.

Rem. V. Consider again, that it is our duty and privilege not to measure afflictions by their smart, but their end. When Israel was dismissed out of Egypt, it was with *gold* and *ear-rings*, Exod. xi. So the Jews were dismissed out of Babylon, with *gifts*, *jewels*, and all necessary *utensils*, Ezra. i. Look more at the latter end of a Christian, than at the beginning of his affliction: consider the patience of Job, and what end the Lord made with him. Look not upon Lazarus lying at Dives' door, but lying in Abraham's bosom. Look not to the beginning of Joseph, who was so far from his dream, that the sun and moon should reverence him, that for two years he was cast where he could see neither sun, moon, or stars; but behold him at the last made ruler over Egypt. Look not upon David, as there was but a step between him and death, nor as he was envied by some, and slighted and despised by others; but behold him seated on his royal throne, and dying in his bed of honour, and his son Solomor, and all his glittering nobles about him. Afflictions are but as a dark entry, into your father's house, or as a dirty lane to a royal palace. Now tell me, souls, whether it be not very great madness to shun the ways of holiness, and walk in ways of wickedness, because afflictions attend those ways.

Rem. VI. Consider once more, that the design of God in all the afflictions that befall them, is only to try them; it is not to wrong or ruin them, as ignorant men are apt to think. "He knoweth the way that I take, and when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold," saith Job. So in *Deut.* viii. 2. "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldest

keep his commandments or no." God afflicted them thus, that he might make them and others know what was in their hearts. Snow covers many a dunghill; so doth prosperity many a rotten heart. It is easy to wade in a warm bath, and every bird can sing on a sun-shiny day, &c. Hard weather tries what health we have; afflictions try what sap, what grace we have. Withered leaves soon fall off in windy weather, and rotten boughs quickly break with heavy weights, &c. You know how to apply it.

Afflictions are like pinching frosts, that search us; where we are most unsound, we shall soonest complain; and where most corruptions lie, we shall most shrink.* We try metal by knocking, if it sound well, then we like it; so God tries his people by knocking, and if under knocks they give a pleasant sound, God will turn their night into day, and their cross into a crown; and they shall hear that voice, "Arise, shine, for the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, and the favours of the Lord are flowing in upon thee."

Rem. VII. Against this Device of Satan, consider lastly, that the afflictions, wrath, and misery, that attend the ways of wickedness, are far greater and heavier than those that attend the ways of holiness. Oh! the lashing and gnawing of conscience that attend men in a way of wickedness. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God." There are snares in all their mercies, and curses and crosses attend all their comforts, both at home and abroad. What is a fine suit of clothes with

* Dunghills raked, send out a filthy steam, ointments a sweet perfume; this is applicable to sinners and saints under the rod.

the plague in them? Or a golden cup, when poison is at the bottom? or a silk stocking with a broken leg? The curse, wrath, hatred, and fierce indignation of God, always attend sinners, walking in a way of wickedness. Turn to *Deut.* xxviii. and read from *ver.* 15. to the end; and turn to *Lev.* xxvi. and read from *ver.* 14. to the end; and then you shall see, how the curse of God follows the wicked (as it were a fury) in all his ways. It attends him in the city, and in the country it hovers over him; coming in it follows him, going out it is ever his comrade; it fills his store with strife, and mingles the wrath of God with his sweetest morsels. It is a moth in his wardrobe, murrain to his cattle, mildew in the field, rot among his sheep, and oft-times makes the fruit of his loins his greatest vexation, and confusion. There is neither solid joy nor lasting peace, attending sinners in their sinful ways. The sword of vengeance every moment hangs over their heads, by a small thread; and what joy and content can attend such souls, if the eye of conscience is but so far open as to see the sword? Ah! the horrors, terrors, and tremblings, that must attend them!

*The tenth Device that Satan hath to draw souls
to sin, is,*

By setting them frequently to compare themselves and their ways with those that are reputed or reported to be worse than themselves. By this Device the devil drew the proud Pharisee to bless himself in a cursed condition; “God I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican, &c.” Why, saith Satan, you swear but petty oaths, as by your faith, and troth, &c. but such persons swear profanely indeed; you are now and then a

little wanton, but there are who daily defile and pollute themselves, by actual uncleanness and filthiness ; you deceive and over-reach your neighbours in things that are but as toys and trifles, but there are those who deceive and over-reach others in things of greatest concernment, even to their ruin ; you do but sit, and chat, and sip with the drunkard, but such persons sit and drink, and are drunk with the drunkard ; you are only a *little* proud in heart and habit, in looks and words, &c.—Now the Remedies against this Device of the devil are these :

Remedy I. Against this Device of Satan, solemnly consider, that there is not a greater, nor a clearer argument to prove a man a hypocrite, than to be quick-sighted abroad, and blind at home ; “To see the mote in another man’s eye, and not the beam in his own ;” to use spectacles to behold other men’s sins, rather than looking-glasses to behold his own ; to be amplifying and aggravating other men’s sins, and mitigating his own.

Rem. II. Spend more time in comparing your internal and external actions, with the rule and word by which you must be judged at last, than in comparing yourselves with those that are worse than yourselves.* The man that compares himself with those that are worse than himself, may seem (to himself and others) to be an angel ; yet, by comparing himself with the word, may see himself like the *devil*, yea, a **VERY DEVIL**. “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil ?”

* The nearer we draw to God and his word the more rottenness we shall find in our bones. The more any man looks into the body of the sun, the less he seeth when he looks down again. It is said of the basilisk, that if he look into a glass, he presently dieth. So will sin, and a sinner (in a spiritual sense) when the soul looks into the word, which is God’s glass, &c.

such men are as much like him, as if they were his own offspring.

Satan is called *The god of this world*, because as God at first did but speak the word, and it was done ; so, if the devil hold up but his finger, and give the least hint, they do his will, though they undo their own souls for ever. Ah ! what monsters would these men appear to be, did they but compare themselves with a righteous rule, and not with the most unrighteous men ; they would appear as black as hell itself.

Rem. III. Seriously consider, that though thy sin be not so great as others, yet without sound repentance, and pardoning mercy from God, thou wilt be as certainly damned as others. What though hell may not be so hot to thee as others, yet hell is as certain to thee as others, unless the glorious grace of God shine forth upon thee in the face of Christ. God will suit men's punishment to their sin, the greatest sin shall be attended with the greatest punishment : alas ! what poor comfort will it be to thee, when thou comest to die, to consider, that thou shalt not be equally tormented with others, yet must be for ever shut out from the glorious presence of God, Christ, angels and saints, and from those good things of eternal life,* that are so many, that they exceed number ; so great, that they exceed measure ; so precious, that they exceed estimation. Sure it is, that the tears of heaven are not sufficient to bewail the loss of heaven ; the worm of grief gnaws as painfully as the fire burns. If those souls, *Acts xx.* wept,

* The gate of indulgence, the gate of hope, the gate of mercy, the gate of glory, the gate of consolation, and the gate of salvation, will be for ever shut against them, *Mat. xxv. 10.*

because they should see Paul's face no more, how deplorable is the eternal deprivation of the beatific vision ?

But this is not all, " thou shalt not only be shut out of heaven, but shut up in hell for ever ;* not only shut out from the presence of God and angels, but shut up with devils and damned spirits for ever ; not only shut out from those sweet, surpassing, inexpressible, and everlasting pleasures that are at God's right hand ; but shut up for ever under those torments that are remediless." Ah ! Sirs, were it not ten thousand times better for you to break off your sins by repentance, than to go on in your sins, till you feel the truth of what you now hear ?

The God of Israel is very merciful ; ah, that you would repent and return, that your souls might live for ever. Remember the torment of the damned is grievous, for the bitterness of the punishment, but most grievous for the eternity of it. To be tormented without end, is that which goes beyond all bounds of desperation : ah, how do the thoughts of this make the damned roar and cry out for disquietude of heart, tear their hair, gnash their teeth, and rage for madness, that they must dwell in everlasting burnings ?

CHAPTER IX.

The eleventh Device that Satan hath to draw the soul to sin, is,

By polluting and defiling the souls and judgments of men with such dangerous errors, as naturally tend to carry the souls of men to all looseness and wickedness, as woeful experience abundantly

* It was a good saying of Chrysostom, speaking of hell,
" Let us not seek where it is, but how we shall escape it."

evidences. Ah! how many are there who are filled with these, and such like Christ dishonouring, and soul-undoing opinions, viz. "That ordinances are poor, low, carnal things, not only to be lived above, but without also. That the scriptures are full of fallacies and uncertainties, and no further to be heeded than they agree with that spirit that is in them. That it is a poor low thing, if not idolatry, to worship God in a Mediator. That the resurrection is already past. That there never was any such man or person as Jesus Christ; but that all is an allegory, and signifies nothing but light and love, and such good frames born in men. That there is neither God nor devil, heaven nor hell, but what is within us. That there is no sin in the saints, that they are under no law but that of the Spirit, which is all freedom. That sin and grace are equally good and agreeth to his will." With a hundred other horrid opinions, which have caused wickedness to break in as a flood among us.—Now the Remedies against this Device of Satan are these that follow:

Remedy I. Against this Device of Satan, solemnly consider, that an erroneous vain mind is as odious to God, as a vicious life. He that had the leprosy in his head, was to be pronounced utterly unclean. Gross errors make the heart foolish, render the life loose, and the soul light in the eye of God. Error spreads and frets like a gangrene, and renders the soul a LEPER in the sight of God.

It was God's heavy and dreadful plague upon the Gentiles, to be given up to a mind void of judgment, or an injudicious, rejected mind, disallowed and abhorred of God; a mind that none have cause to glory in, but rather to be ashamed of. I think, that in these days God punishes many men's former wickedness, by giving them up to

soul-ruining errors. " Ah, Lord ! this mercy I humbly beg, that thou wouldest rather take me into thine own hand, and do any thing with me than give me up to those sad errors, which thousands have fallen into, and are in a way of perishing for ever. It were best that we never erred, next to that, that we amended our errors.

Rem. II. Receive the truth affectionately, and let it dwell in your souls plenteously ; when men stand out, and bar the door of their souls against truth, when truth would enter, God in justice gives up such persons to be deluded and deceived by error, to their eternal destruction, 2 *Thess.* ii. 10, 11, 12. " Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, God shall send them strong delusions, or as the Greek hath it, (The efficacy of error.) That they shall believe a lie. That they all might be DAMNED, who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." " Ah, Sirs ! as you love your souls, do not tempt and provoke God, by withholding and out-facing his truth, to give you up to believe a lie, that you may be damned. There are no men on earth so fenced against error, as those are, who receive the truth in the love of it. Such souls * are not easily tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive."** It is not he that receives most of the truth into his head, but he that receives most of the truth affectionately into his heart, that enjoys the happiness of having his judgment sound and clear, while others are deluded and deceived by them, who make it

* Eph. iv. 14. EN TE KUBEIA, Gr. signifies cogging with a die ; such sleights as cheats and false gamesters use at dice.

their business to infect the judgments, and ruin the souls of men.

Ah, Sirs! as you would not have your judgments polluted and defiled with error, *Let the word of Christ, that is more precious than gold, yea, than fine gold, dwell plentifully in you.** It is not the hearing or knowing of truth, nor commanding and talking of it, but the indwelling of truth in your souls, that will keep your judgments chaste and sound in the midst of all those glittering errors that betray many souls into his hands, who can easily *transform himself into an angel of light*, that he may draw others to lay in chains of darkness with him for ever.† Oh! let not the word be a stranger, but make it your choicest companion; then will you be able to stand in the day, wherein many shall fall on your right hand, and on your left, by the subtlety of those who shall say, *Lo, here is Christ, and lo, there is Christ.*

There was more wit than grace in his speech who counselled his friend, “Not to come too nigh unto truth, lest his teeth should be beaten out with its heels.” Ah, souls! if truth dwell plenteously in you, you are happy, if not, you are unhappy under all your outward felicity.

“It is with truth (saith Melancthon) as it is with holy water, every one praised it, and thought it had some rare virtue in it, but offer to sprinkle them with it, and they will shut their eyes, and turn away their faces from it.”

Rem. III. Solemnly consider, that error makes the owner to suffer loss. All the pains and labour

* Col. iii. 16. In-dwell in you, as an ingrafted word incorporated into your souls, so that it become a part of yourselves.

† They must needs err that know not God’s ways; yet they cannot wander so wide, as to miss of hell.

that men take to defend, maintain, and spread abroad their errors to infect the world, shall bring no profit, nor comfort to them in that day, wherein "every man's work shall be made manifest, and the fire shall try it, of what sort it is,"* as the Apostle shews, in that remarkable scripture, 1 Cor. iii. 11—15. "Ah! that all those who rise up early, and go to bed late, who spend their time, strength, spirits, and their all, to advance and spread abroad God dishonouring, and soul-undoing opinions, would seriously consider of this, that they shall lose all the pains, cost, and charge that they have been, or shall be at, for the propagating of error; and if they are ever saved, it will be by fire, as the Apostle there shews. Ah, sirs! is it nothing to lay out your money for that which is not bread? and your strength for that which cannot profit you in the day you must make up your account; and all your works be tried by fire. Ah! that such souls would now at last, *buy the truth and sell it not.* Remember you can never over-buy it, whatsoever you give for it; you can never sufficiently sell it, if you could have all the world in exchange for it.

Remember this, that one day, yea, one hour, spent in the study or propagation of truth, will yield the soul more comfort and profit, than many thousand years spent in the study and propagation of corrupt and vain opinions, that have their rise from the god of this world, and not from that God who shall at last judge this world, and all the corrupt opinions of men.

Rem. IV. Hate, reject, and abominate all those doctrines and opinions that are contrary to godliness,

* Error, as a glass, is bright, but brittle, and cannot endure the hammer or fire, as gold can, which, though rubbed or melted, remains firm and shines the brighter.

and which open a door to profaneness, and all such as require men to maintain a strictness, above what the scripture requireth: and advance and lift up corrupt nature, to do supernatural things, which none can do, but by that supernatural power which raised Christ from the grave; and all such opinions, as lift up our own righteousness, in the room of Christ's righteousness; and which place good works in the throne of Christ, and make them co-partners with him, &c. And all those opinions and doctrines, that so set and cry up his righteousness; as to cry down all duties of holiness and righteousness,* and all those doctrines and opinions, that make the glorious and blessed privileges of believers, in the days of the gospel, inferior to what they were in the time of the law. Ah! did your souls arise with a holy hatred, and a strong indignation against such doctrines and opinions, you would stand when others fall, and you would shine as the sun in her glory, when many, that were once as shining stars, go out as a stinking snuff of a candle.

Rem. V. Hold fast the truth. As men take no hold on the arm of flesh, *Jer. xvii. 5.* till they let go the arm of God: so men take no hold on error, till they have let go their hold of truth; therefore hold fast the truth. Truth is thy crown, hold it fast and let no man take it from thee. Hath not God made truth sweet to thy soul, yea, *sweeter than the honey, or the honey-comb?* And will you not go on to heaven, feeding upon truth, that heavenly honey-comb, as Sampson did upon his honey-comb? Let me ask you, Sirs, have you not found truth to be a soul-comforting, a soul-refreshing,

* Gideon had seventy sons, and but one bastard, and yet that bastard destroyed all the rest except one. *Judges ix. 5.* One turn may lead a man quite out of the way.

and a soul-establishing principle? Have not you found truth a GUIDE to lead you, a STAFF to uphold you, a CORDIAL to strengthen you, and a MEDICINE to heal you? And will not you hold fast the truth? Hath not truth been your best friend in your worst days? Hath it not stood by you, when friends have forsaken you? Hath it not done more for you than all the world could do against you; and will not you hold fast the truth? Is not truth your right eye, without which you cannot see for Christ? Your right hand, without which you cannot do for him? And your right foot, without which you cannot walk with him? And will you not hold fast the truth? Oh! hold fast the truth in your judgments and understandings, in your wills and affections, in your profession and conversation.

Truth is more precious than gold or rubies, "and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to her." Truth is that heavenly glass, wherein we may see the lustre and glory of divine wisdom, power, love, and mercy. In this glass you may see the face, the favour, and riches of Christ. Oh! let your souls cleave to truth, as Ruth did to Naomi, *Ruth i. 15, 16.* and say, "I will not leave truth, nor return from following after it; but where it goes, I will go, and where it lodgeth, I will lodge, and nothing but death shall part truth and my soul."* What was said to the church of Philadelphia, I may say to you; "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." The crown is the summit of royalty; and such is truth; "Let no man take thy crown. Hold fast the faithful word," as St. Paul to Titus speaks.

* Though I cannot dispute for the truth, yet can I die for the truth, said a blessed martyr.

Titus i. 9. You had better part with any thing than truth ; you had better part with honours, riches, friends, pleasures, and the world's favours, yea, your nearest and dearest relations, and your very lives, than to let go truth. Oh ! keep the truth, and truth will keep you safe and happy for ever. Blessed are those souls who are kept by THE TRUTH.

Rem. VI. Keep humble ; humility will keep the soul free from any darts cast by Satan, and from many erroneous snares spread by him. As low trees and shrubs are free from many violent blasts of wind, which shake and rend the taller ones, so humble souls are free from those blasts of error, which rend and tear proud lofty souls. Satan and the world have greater difficulty to fasten errors upon humble souls. The God of light and truth delights to dwell with the humble ; and the more light and truth dwell in the soul, the further will darkness and error stand from it. The God of grace pours grace into the humble, as men pour liquor into empty vessels ; and the more grace is poured into the soul, the less error will be able to over-power, or infect it.

That is a sweet word in *Ps. xxv. 9.* "The meek (or the humble) will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." And certainly, those who are guided and taught of God, are not easily drawn aside into ways of error. Oh ! take heed of spiritual pride ; pride fills our fancies, weakens our graces, and makes room in our hearts for error. There are no men on earth so soon entangled, and so easily conquered by error, as proud men. Oh ! it is dangerous to love to be wise above what is written ; to be curious, and unsüber in your desire of knowledge, and to trust to your own capacities and abilities, to undertake to pry into all

secrets, and to be puffed up with a carnal mind. Souls that are thus soaring up, above the bounds and limits of humility, usually fall into the very worst of errors, as experience daily shews.*

Rem. VII. Solemnly consider, the great evils that errors have produced. Error is a fruitful mother, and hath brought forth such monstrous children, as have set towns, cities and nations on fire. Errors in conscience produce many great evils, not only in men's own souls, but also in human affairs. Error is that vile woman, "that hath cast down and wounded many, yea, slain many strong, many great, many learned, and many professing men," in former times, and in our time too, as is evident to all that are not left of God, destitute of the truth, and blinded by Satan. Oh the graces that error hath weakened, and the joys and comforts that it hath clouded, if not buried. Oh the hands that error hath weakened, the eyes that it hath blinded, the judgments of men that it hath perverted, the minds that it hath darkened, the hearts that it hath hardened, the affections that it hath cooled, the consciences that it hath seared, and the lives of men that it hath polluted. Ah, souls ! can you solemnly consider of this, and not tremble more at error than at hell itself ?

The twelfth Device of Satan to draw the soul to sin, is,

To affect wicked company, to keep wicked society ; and oh ! the horrid impieties and wickedness that Satan hath caused men to commit, by inducing them to sit and associate themselves with vain persons.---Now the Remedies against this Device of the devil, are these :

* The proud soul is like him that gazed upon the moon but fell into the pit.

Remedy I. Against this Device of Satan, dwell (till your hearts are affected) upon those commands of God that expressly require us to shun the society of the wicked.* *Eph.* v. 11. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." *Prov.* iv. 14, 15, 16. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." *1 Cor.* v. 9, 10, 11. *2 Thess.* iii. 6. *Prov.* i. 10—15. Turn to these scriptures, and let your souls dwell upon them, till a holy indignation be raised in them against fellowship with vain men. *God will not take the wicked by the hand*, as Job speaks; why then should you? God's commands are not like those that are easily reversed, but they are like those of the Medes, that cannot be changed. *If these commands be not now observed by thee, they will at last be witnesses against thee, and mill-stones to sink thee, in that day when Christ shall judge the world.*

Rem. II. Seriously consider, that their company is very infectious and dangerous, as is clear from the scriptures above mentioned. Ah! how many have lost their names, their estates, their strength, God, heaven, and their own souls, by walking with wicked men? As ye shun a stinking carcass; as the seamen shun sands, and rocks, and shelves; as ye shun those that have the plague-sore running upon them, so should you shun the society of wicked men.† As weeds endanger the corn, and bad humours the blood, or as an infected house in

* "The commands of God must outweigh all authority and example of men."—*Jerome.*

† A man that keepeth ill company, like him that walketh in the sun, is tanned insensibly.

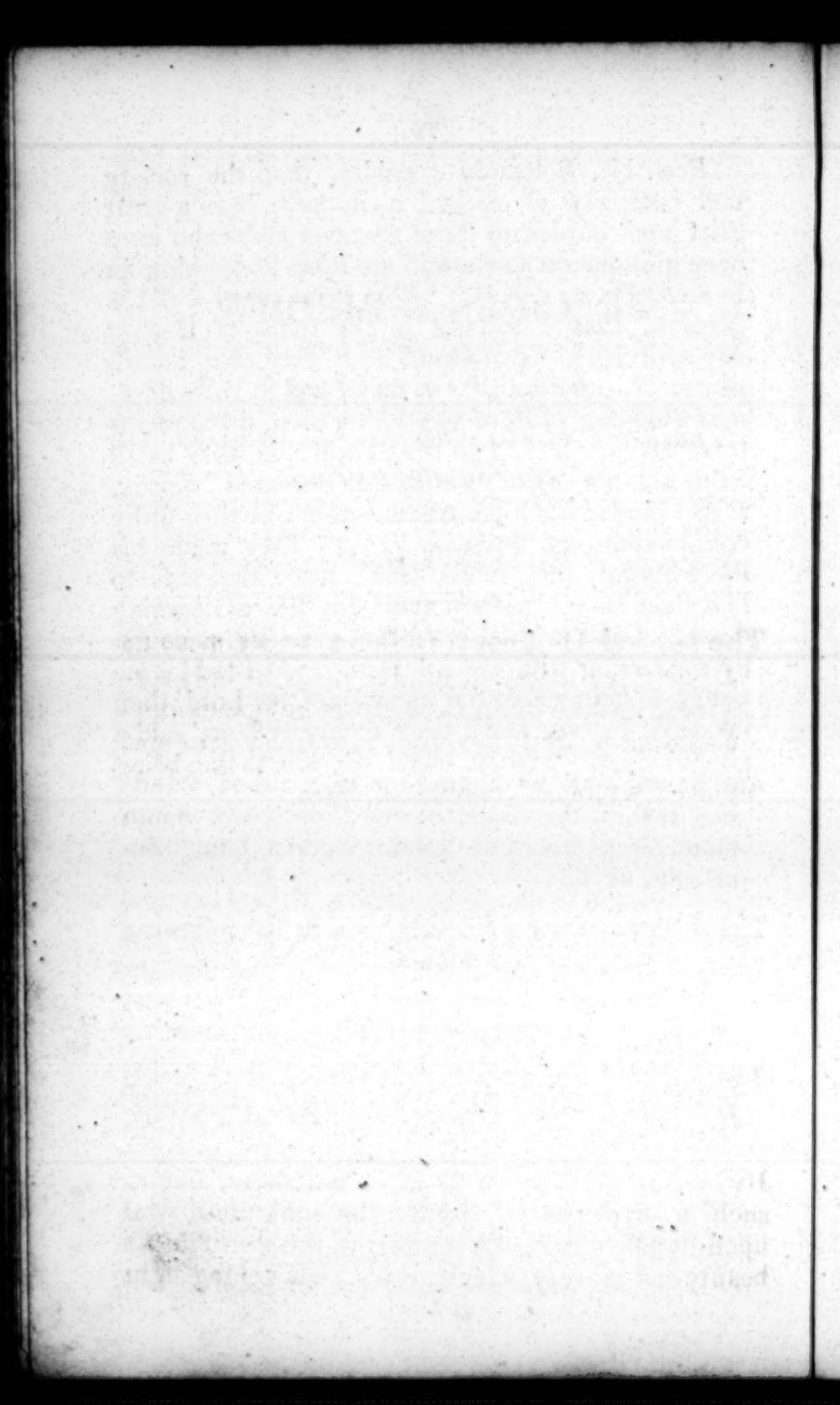
the neighbourhood ; so does wicked company the soul.

Bias, a Heathen man, being at sea in a great storm, and perceiving many wicked men with him in the ship, calling upon the gods, " Oh, saith he, forbear prayer, hold your tongues, I would not have the gods take notice that you are here, they sure will drown us all if they should." Ah, Sirs ! could a Heathen see so much danger in the society of wicked men, and can you see none ? *Prov. xiii. 20*

Rem. III. Look always upon wicked men, under those names and notions in which the scripture represents them.* The scripture calls them *lions* for their fierceness, *bears* for their cruelty, *dragons* for their hideousness, *dogs* for their filthiness, *wolves* for their subtlety. The scripture styles them " *scorpions, vipers, thorns, briars, thistles, brambles, stubble, dirt, chaff, dust, dross, smoke, scum,*" as you may see in the note. It is not safe to look upon wicked men under those names and notions that they themselves, or their flatterers represent them by ; this may delude the soul ; but looking upon them under the names and notions by which the scripture sets them forth, may preserve the soul from frequenting their company, and delighting in their society. *Do not tell me what this man calls them, or how such persons count of them* ; but tell me what the scripture calls them, how doth the scripture count of them ? As Nabal's name was, so was his nature ; and as wicked men's names are, so are their natures ; you may know well enough what is within them, by the suitable names the Holy Ghost hath given them.

* 2 Tim. iv. 17. Isa. xi. 7. xxv. 7. 2 Pet. ii. 22. Mat. x. 16. Rev. ix. 3. 10. Mat. iii. 7. Isa. x. 17. Mat. vii. 16. Judges ix. 14. Job xxi. 18. Ps. xviii. 42. i. 4. Isa. xli. 2. Ezek. xxii. 18, 19. Isa. ix. 5. Ezek. xxiv. 6.

Rem. IV. Solemnly consider, that the society and company of wicked men, have been a great grief and burden to those precious souls who were once glorious on earth, and are now triumphing in heaven, *Ps. cxx. 5, 6.* ‘Woe is me that I dwell in Mesech, that I sojourn in the tents of Kedar.’ My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. So Jeremiah, “Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of way-faring men, that I might leave my people, and go from them ; for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men,” *Jer. ix. 2.* So they vexed Lot’s righteous soul by their filthy conversation, (2 Peter ii. 7, 8.) They made his life a burden, they made death more desirable to him than life ; yea, they made his life a lingering death. Guilt or grief is all that gracious souls get by conversing with wicked men. ‘O Lord let me not go to hell, where the wicked are, for Lord, thou knowest, I never loved their company here,’ said a gracious gentlewoman when she was to die, being in much trouble of conscience. *Beza.*



PRECIOUS REMEDIES

AGAINST

SATAN'S DEVICES.

BEING A COMPANION FOR CHRISTIANS
OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

PART II.

The several Devices of Satan to keep souls from holy duties, to hinder them in holy services, and to keep them from religious performances, and thereby draw them into sin.

And he shewed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. Zechariah iii. 1.

The truth of this I shall shew you in the following particulars:

CHAPTER I.

The first Device that Satan has to draw souls from holy duties, and to keep them from religious services, is,

By presenting the world in such a dress, and in such a garb, as to insnare the soul, and steal upon its affections; he represents the world in its beauty and bravery, which proves a bewitching sight

to a world of men.* It is true, this took not Christ, because Satan could find no matter in him for his temptation to work upon, but he no sooner casts out his golden bait, than we are ready to play with it ; he no sooner throws out his golden ball, but men are apt to run after it, though they lose God and their souls in the pursuit. Ah ! how many professors in these days have for a time followed hard after God, Christ, and ordinances, till the devil has set before them the world in all its beauty and bravery, which has bewitched them first to have low thoughts of holy things, and then to be cold in their affections to them, and then to slight them ; and at last, with the young man in the gospel, to turn their backs upon them. Where one thousand is destroyed by the world's frowns, ten thousand are destroyed by its smiles. The world, siren-like, it sings to us, and sinks us ; it kisses us, and betrays us, like Judas ; it kisses us, and smites us under the fifth rib, like Joab. The honour, splendour, and all the glory of this world, are but sweet poisons, that will much endanger us, if they do not eternally destroy us.—Now the Remedies against this Device of Satan, are these :

Remedy I. Dwell upon the impotency and weakness of all things here below ; they are not able to secure you from the least evil : they are not able to procure you the least desirable good. The crown of gold cannot cure the head-ache, nor the velvet slipper ease the gout, nor can the jewel about the neck take away the pain of the teeth. The frogs of Egypt entered into rich men's houses as well as the poor ; our daily experience evidences this, that

* The apparent beauty of the world endangers a Christian more than its strength ; the flattering sun-shine more than the blustering storm. In storms we keep our garments close about us.

all the honours, riches, &c. that men enjoy, cannot free them from the cholic, nor the fever.* Nay, what is more strange, a great deal of wealth cannot keep men from falling into extreme poverty, *Judges i. 6.* you shall find seventy kings with their fingers and toes cut off, glad to lick up crumbs under another king's table, and shortly after, the same king that brought them to this penury, is reduced to the same poverty and misery. Why then should that be a bar to keep thee out of heaven, that cannot give thee the least ease on earth ?

Rem. II. Dwell upon the vanity and impotency of all worldly good. This is the sum of Solomon's sermon, *Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity.* This our first parents found, and therefore named their second son Abel, or *vanity.* Solomon who had tried these things, could best tell the vanity of them and he preached this sermon over again and again, *Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity.* It is sad to think how many thousands there are that are ready to say with the preacher, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity*, nay even to swear it, and yet follow after these things, as if there were no glory, nor happiness, but what is to be found in them. Such men will sell Christ, heaven, and their souls for a trifl^e; who call these things vanity but do not cordially believe them to be so. They set their hearts upon them; as if they were their crown, the top of all their royalty. Oh ! let your souls dwell upon the vanity of all things here below, till your hearts are so thoroughly convinced and persuaded of the vanity of them, as to trample upon them, and make them

* Nagas the Scythian, despising the rich presents and ornaments that were sent unto him by the Emperor of Constantinople, asked whether those things could drive away calamities, diseases, or death.

a footstool for Christ to get up, and ride in a holy triumph in your hearts.

Chrysostom said once, “ That if he were the fittest in the world to preach a sermon to the whole world, gathered together in one congregation, and had some high mountain for his pulpit, from whence he might have the prospect of all the world in his view, and were furnished with a voice of brass, a voice as loud as the trumpet of the arch-angel, that all the world might hear him, he would choose to preach upon no other text than that in the Psalms, “ O mortal men, how long will ye love vanity, and follow after leasing.” Ah, did we but weigh man’s pain with his payment, his crosses with his mercies, his miseries with his pleasures, we should then see, that there is nothing got by the bargain, and conclude, “ Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.”

Tell me, you that say all things under the sun are vanity, if you really believe what you say ? Why do you spend more time and thoughts on the world, than you do on Christ, heaven, and your immortal souls ? Why do you then neglect your duty towards God, to get the world ? Why do you then so eagerly pursue after the world, and remain so cold in your pursuit after God, Christ, and holiness ? Why then are your hearts so exceedingly raised, when the world comes in and smiles upon you ; and so much dejected and cast down, when the world frowns upon you, and with Jonah’s gourd withers before you.

Rem. III. Consider the uncertainty, mutability, and inconsistency, of all things under the sun.* Man himself is but the dream of a dream, the

* Riches were never true to any that trusted in them ; they have deceived men as Job’s brook did the poor traveller, in the summer-season, Job vi. 15.

generation of a fancy, an empty vanity, and a poor, feeble, dying flash. All earthly things are as transitory as a hasty torrent, a shadow, a ship, a bird, an arrow, a post that passeth by ; “ Why shouldst thou set thine eyes upon that which is not ? ” saith Solomon. And saith the Apostle, “ The fashion of this world passeth away,” Heaven only hath a foundation, earth hath none, but is hung upon nothing, as Job speaks. The Apostle willed Timothy, to “ Charge rich men that they be not high-minded, nor put their trust in uncertain riches.”* They are like bad servants, who will never tarry long with one master; as a bird hop-peth from tree to tree, so do the honours and riches of this world pass from man to man; let Job and Nebuchadnezzar testify this truth, who fell from great wealth to great want. No man can promise himself to be wealthy till night; one storm at sea, one coal of fire, one false friend, one unadvised word, one false witness, may make you a beggar, and a prisoner all at once. All the riches and glory of this world are but as smoke and chaff, that vanishes : *As a dream and vision in the night, that tarrieth not.* As if a hungry man dream, and think that he is eating and when he awakes, his soul is empty; and like a thirsty man which thinks he is drinking, and behold when he is awaked, his soul is faint, as the Prophet *Isaiah* saith. Where is the glory of Solomon? The sumptuous buildings of Nebuchadnezzar? The nine hundred chariots of Sisera? The power of Alexander? The authority of Augustus, that commanded the whole world to be taxed? Those that have been the most glorious, in what men generally account glorious and excellent,

* 1 Cor. vii. 31. intimates, “ That there is nothing of any firmness, nor solid consistence in the creature.”

have had inglorious ends; as Sampson for strength; Absalom for beauty; Ahithophel for policy; Haman for favour; Asael for swiftness; Alexander for great conquest, and yet after twelve years was poisoned, you may see the same in the four mighty kingdoms, the Chaldean, Persian, Grecian and Roman, how soon were they gone and forgotten! Now rich, now poor; now full, now empty; now honourable, now despised; now health, now sickness; now strength, now weakness. Oh! let not these uncertain things keep you from those holy services, and heavenly employments, in which you may be happy here, and in which your soul may be eternally blessed, when all these transitory things shall bid it an everlasting farewell.

Rem. IV. Seriously consider, that the great things of this world are very hurtful and dangerous to the outward and inward man, through the corruptions that are in the hearts of men. Oh! the rest, peace, comfort, and content that the things of this world deprive many men of. Oh the fears, cares, envy, malice, dangers, and mischiefs, that they subject men to. They oftentimes make men carnally confident, The rich man's riches are a strong tower in his imagination. "I said in my prosperity I should never be moved." They often swell the heart with pride, and make men forget and neglect God, and despise the rock of their salvation. "When Jeshurun waxed fat, and was grown thick, and covered with fatness, then he forgot, and forsook God that made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation," as Moses spake. Ah! the time, the thoughts, the spirits, that the things of the world consume and spend. Oh! how do they hinder the actings of faith upon God? Interrupt our sweet communion with him! Abate our love to his people, cool our love to the things of

God and induce us to act like those that are most unlike him ? Oh ! the deadness and barrenness that attend men under great outward mercies. Oh ! how the riches of the world choke the word ; so that men live under the most soul-searching, and soul-enriching means, with lean souls. They have full purses, but their hearts are empty of grace. In *Gen. xiii. 2* It is said, that *Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.* According to the Hebrew, it is, *Abraham was very heavy* ; to shew, that riches are a heavy burden, and a hinderance many times to heaven and happiness.

King Henry the fourth asked the Duke of Alva, "if he had observed the great eclipse of the sun which had lately happened ? No, (said the Duke) I have so much to do on earth, that I have no leisure to look up to heaven." Ah ! that this were not true of most professors in these days ; it is sad to think, that their hearts and time are so much taken up with earthly things, that they have scarce any leisure to look up to heaven, or after Christ and the things that belong to their everlasting peace.

Riches, though well got, yet are but like manna, those that gathered little had no want, and those that gathered more, it was of no use to them. The world is troublesome, and yet it is loved ; what would it be, if it were peaceable ? You embrace it, though filthy ; what would you do if it were beautiful ? You cannot keep your hands from the thorns ; how earnest would you be then in gathering the flowers ? The world may be fitly likened to the serpent Scytale, whereof it is reported, that when she cannot overtake the flying passengers, she with her beautiful colours so astonishes and amazes them, that they have no power to pass away, till she has stung them. Ah ! how many thousands are there now on earth, that have found this true by

experience ; they have spun a fair thread to strangle themselves, both temporally, and eternally, being bewitched by the beauty and glory of this enticing world.

Rem. V. Consider, that all the felicity of this world is mixed ; our light is mixed with darkness, our joy with sorrow, our pleasures with pain, &c. If our light be spiritual, clear, and quick, we may see in the felicity of this world, our wine mixed with water, our honey with gall, our sugar with wormwood, and our roses with thorns. Sorrow attends worldly joy; danger, worldly safety; loss, worldly labours; tears, worldly purposes. As to these things men's hopes are vain, their sorrow certain, and their joy feigned. The Apostle calls this world, *A sea of glass*; a sea for the trouble of it, and glass for the brittleness and bitterness of it. "The honours, profits, pleasures, and delights of this world, are true gardens of Adonis, where we can gather nothing but trivial flowers, surrounded with many briars."

Rem. VI. Get better acquaintance, and assurance of more blessed and glorious things. Let heaven be a man's object, and earth will soon be abject or despised by him. That which raised up the spirits of the saints of old, *Heb.* x. and xi. to trample upon all the beauty and glory of the world, was the acquaintance with "and assurance of better and more durable things ; they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves, that they had in heaven a better and a more enduring substance. They looked for a house that had foundation, whose builder and maker was God : and they looked for another country, even an heavenly. They saw him that was invisible, and had an eye to the recompence of reward." And this made them count all the glory and bravery of this world, too

poor and contemptible for them to set their hearts upon. The main reason why men dote upon the world, and damn their souls to get it, is, because *they are not acquainted with a greater glory.* Men ate acorns, till they were acquainted with the use of wheat. Ah! were men more acquainted with what union and communion with God means; that it is to “have a new name, and a new stone, that none knows, but he that hath it;” did they but taste more of heaven, and live more in heaven, and had more glorious hopes of going to heaven, how easily would they have the world under their feet!

It was an excellent saying of Lewis of Bavier, emperor of Germany, “Such goods are worth getting and owing, as will not sink, nor wash away, if a shipwreck happen, but will wade and swim out with us.” It is said of Lazarus “that after his resurrection from the dead, he was never seen to laugh, his thoughts and affections were so fixed in heaven, though his body were on earth; and therefore he could not but slight temporal things, his heart was so bent and set upon eternals.” There are goods of the throne of grace, as God, Christ, the Spirit, adoption, justification, remission of sin, peace with God, and peace with conscience: and there are goods of the foot-stool, as honours, riches, the favours of creatures, and other comforts and accommodations of this life. Now he that has acquaintance with, and assurance of the goods of the throne, will easily trample upon the goods of the foot-stool. When Basil was tempted with money and preferment, saith he, “Give me money that may last for ever, and glory that may eternally flourish; for the fashion of this world passeth away, as the waters of a river that run by a city.” Ah that you would make it your business and

work, to mind and make more sure to your own souls, the great things of eternity, that will yield you joy in life, peace in death, and a crown of righteousness in the day of Christ's appearing ; that will lift up your souls above all the beauty and bravery of this bewitching world, and raise your feet above other men's heads. When a man comes to be assured of a crown, a sceptre, the royal robe, &c. he then begins to have low, mean and contemptible thoughts of those things that before he highly prized ; so will assurance of more great and glorious things, raise in the soul a holy scorn and contempt of all these poor, trifling things, which the soul before valued above God, Christ, heaven, &c.

Rem. VII. Seriously consider, that true happiness and satisfaction is not to be had in the enjoyment of any worldly good. True happiness is too great and glorious a thing to be found in any thing which is below that God who is a Christian's chiefest good. The blessed angels, those glittering courtiers, have all felicity and blessedness ; and yet they have neither gold nor silver, jewels, nor any of the beauty and glory of this world ; certainly, if happiness were to be found in these things, the Lord Jesus, who is the right and royal heir of all things, would have exchanged his cradle for his crown ; his birth chamber (a stable) for a royal palace ; his poverty for plenty ; his despised followers for shining courtiers ; and his mean provisions for the choicest delicacies, &c. Certainly "happiness lies not in those things that a man may enjoy, and yet be miserable for ever." Now a man may be great, and graceless, with Pharaoh ; honourable, and damnable, with Saul ; rich, and miserable, with Dives, &c. therefore happiness lies not in these things. Certainly happiness lies not in those things that cannot comfort a man upon a dying bed, is it

honours, riches, or friends, &c.* that can comfort you when you come to die? Or is it not rather faith in the blood of Christ, the witness of his Spirit, the sense and feeling of his love and favour, and the hopes of eternally reigning with him. Can happiness lie in those things that cannot give us health, strength, or ease, a good night's rest, an hour's sleep, or a good appetite. Why, all the honours, riches, and delights of this world, cannot give us these poor things: therefore, certainly happiness lies not in the enjoyment of them, &c. And surely happiness is not to be found in these things that cannot satisfy the souls of men: now none of these things can satisfy the soul. "He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase; this is also vanity," said the wise man. The reasonable soul may be busied about other things, but it cannot be filled with them. The barren womb, the horse-leech's daughter, hell and the grave, Prov. xxx. 15. will as soon be satisfied, as the soul of man will by the enjoyment of any worldly good. Some one thing or other will be for ever wanting to that soul that has nothing but outward good to live upon. You may as soon fill a bag with wisdom, a chest with virtue, or a circle with a triangle, as the heart of man with any thing here below. A man may have enough of the world to sink him, but he can never have enough to satisfy him.

Rem. VIII. Solemnly consider the importance of the soul, Oh! the soul of man is more worth than a thousand worlds; we cannot abase it more than by letting it dote upon a little shining earth, a little

* Gregory the great used to say, "He is poor whose soul is void of grace, not him whose coffers are empty of money."

painted beauty, and fading glory, when it is capable of union with Christ, communion with God, and of enjoying the eternal vision.

Seneca could say, "I am too great, and born to greater things, than that I should be a slave to my body." Oh ! do you say, my soul is too great, and born to greater things, than that I should confine it to the heap of white and yellow earth.

I have been the longer upon the Remedies that may help us against this dangerous Device of Satan, because he does usually more hurt to the souls of men by this, than by all other Devices. For a close, I wish, as once Chrysostom did, that that sentence, *Eccl. ii. 11.* ("Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do ; and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun,") were engraven on the door-posts into which you enter, on the tables where you sit, on the dishes out of which you eat, on the cups out of which you drink, on the bedsteads where you lie, on the walls of the house where you dwell, on the garments which you wear, on the heads of the horses on which you ride, and on the foreheads of all them whom you meet, that your souls may not, by the beauty and glory of the world, be kept from those holy and heavenly services, in which you may be blessed while you live, and happy when you die ; that you may breathe out your last into his bosom who lives for ever, and who will make them happy for ever that prefer Christ's spirituals and eternals, above all temporal and transitory things

CHAPTER II.

The second Device that Satan has to draw souls from holy duties, and keep them from religious services, is,

By presenting to them, the danger, losses, and sufferings that attend the performance of such religious services. By this Device Satan kept those that believed on Christ, from confessing him, *John* xii. 42. “ Nevertheless among the chief rulers, also, many believed on him ; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.” I would walk in all the ways of God, and give up myself to the strictest way of holiness, but I am afraid dangers and losses will attend me on the one hand, and perhaps many sufferings on the other, saith many a man. Oh ! how should we set ourselves against this temptation and Device of Satan.—Now the Remedies against this Device of Satan, are these that follow :

Remedy I. Consider, that all the troubles and afflictions that you meet with in a way of righteousness, shall never hurt nor harm you. “ And who is he that shall harm you, if you be followers of that which is good ? ” saith the Apostle, *i. e.* none shall harm you. Natural conscience cannot but do homage to the image of God, stamped upon the natures, words, works, and lives of the godly ; as we may see in the behaviour of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius towards Daniel. All afflictions and troubles which attend men in a way of righteousness, can never rob them of their treasure, their jewels ; they may rob them of some outward things, but their treasures are the presence and favour of God, union and communion with God, pardon of sin, joy of the Spirit, peace of conscience ; these are jewels none can give but Christ,

nor can any take away but him. Now, why should a gracious soul keep from a way of holiness, because of afflictions? when no afflictions can strip him of his heavenly jewels, his holy ornaments, nor rob him of his safety here, nor his happiness and glory hereafter. Why should that man be afraid, or troubled for storms at sea, whose treasures are sure in a friend's hand upon land? Why, a believer's treasure is always safe in the hands of Christ; his life, his soul, his grace, his comfort, and his crown, are all safe in the hand of Christ. "I know him in whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, until that day," saith the Apostle. The child's most precious things are most secure in his father's hands; so are our souls, graces, and comforts, safe in the hand of Christ.

Rem. II. Consider, that other precious saints, who were shining lights on earth, and are now triumphing in heaven, held on in religious services, notwithstanding all the troubles and dangers that surrounded them.* Nehemiah and Ezra were surrounded with dangers on the left hand and on the right, and yet in the face of all they hold on building the temple, and the wall of Jerusalem: so Daniel, and those precious worthies, *Ps. xliv.* under the want of outward encouragements, and in the face of a world of very great discouragements, their souls clave to God and his ways "though they

* Will. Flower (martyr) said, "that heaven should as soon fall, as he would forsake his profession, or depart in the least degree from it." So Santus, being under as great tormentas ever was read of, cried out, "I am a Christian." No torment could compel him to decline the service of God. I might produce a cloud of witnesses; but if these do not animate you to be noble and brave, I am afraid more will not.

were sore broken in the place of dragons, and covered with the shadow of death ; yea, though they were all the day long counted as sheep for the slaughter, yet their hearts were not turned back, neither did their steps decline from his ways." Though bonds and imprisonments attended Paul, and the rest of the Apostles, in every place, yet they held on in the work and service of the Lord ; and why then should you degenerate from their holy examples, which it is your duty, and your glory to follow.

Rem. III. Consider further, that all the troubles and dangers that attend the performance of holy duties, and heavenly services, are but temporal and momentary ; but the neglect of them may lay you open to all temporal, spiritual, and eternal dangers. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ?* He saith not, if we reject or renounce so great salvation ? No ; but if we neglect, or shift off (disregard, or not care for it,) so great salvation, how shall we escape ? That is, we cannot by any way, means, or device, in the world, escape : Divine justice will be above us, in spite of our very souls. The performing of religious "services, may lay you open to the frowns of men, but the neglect of them will lay you open to the frowns of God ; the doing of them may render you contemptible in the eyes of men, but the neglect of them may render you contemptible in the eyes of God ; the doing of them may be the loss of your estate, but the neglect of them may be the loss of God, Christ, heaven, and your soul for ever ; the doing of them may deprive you of some outward, temporal enjoyments, the neglect of them may shut you out from that excellent matchless glory, "that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of men to conceive." Remember there is no man that breathes,

but shall suffer more by neglecting those holy and heavenly services that God commands, commends, and rewards, than he can possibly lose by doing of them.

Rem. IV. Consider also, that God knows how to deliver from troubles, by troubles; from afflictions, by affliction; from dangers, by dangers. God by small troubles and afflictions, often delivers his people from great ones, so that they shall say, "We had perished, if we had not perished; we had been undone if we had not been undone." God will so order the afflictions that befall you in a way of righteousness, that your souls shall say, we would not for all the world, but have met with such troubles and afflictions: for surely, had not these befallen us, it might have been much worse with us. Oh! the carnal security, pride, formality, luke-warmness, censoriousness, and earthly mindedness, that God has cured us of, by the troubles and dangers that we have met with, in the ways and services of the Lord.

I remember a story of a godly man, that as he was going to take ship for France, he broke his leg; and it pleased providence so to order it, that the ship he would have gone in, in that very voyage was cast away, and not a man saved. So the Lord many times breaks our bones, but it is in order to the saving of our lives, and our souls for ever; he gives us a portion that makes us heartsick, but it is in order to the making us perfectly well. Therefore, let no danger nor misery hinder you from your duty.

Rem. V. Consider lastly, that you shall gain more in the service of God, and by walking in righteous and holy ways, though troubles and afflictions attend you, than you can possibly suffer or lose, by being found in the service of God. *Godliness is*

great gain. Oh ! the joy, peace, comfort, and rest, that saints meet with in the ways and service of God. They find that religious services are not empty things, but things in which God is pleased to discover his beauty and glory to their souls.* “ My soul thirsts for God (*said David,*) that I might see thy beauty and thy glory, As I have seen thee in thy sanctuary.” Oh ! the pleasant looks, words, and hints, the comfortable influences, and sweet messages, that gracious souls have from heaven, when they wait upon God in holy and heavenly services, the least of which will darken and eclipse all the glory of this world, and richly recompense the soul for all the troubles, afflictions, and dangers that have attended it in the service of God. O, the saints can say under all their troubles and afflictions, that they have meat to eat, and drink to drink, that the world knows not of : that they have such incomes, refreshments, and warmings, &c. that they would not exchange for all the honours, riches, and dainties, of this world. Ah ! let but a Christian compare his external losses, with his spiritual, internal, and eternal gain, and he shall find, that for every penny that he loses in the service of God, he gains a pound ; and for every pound that he loses, he gains a hundred ; for every hundred lost, he gains a thousand ; we lose pins in his service, and find pearls ; we lose the favour of the creature, and peace with the creature, and it may be the comforts and contents of the creature ; but we have the favour of God, peace with conscience, and the comforts and contents of a better life. Ah ! did the

* Tertulian, in his book to the martyrs, hath an apt saying, “ That's right and good merchandize, when something is parted with to gain more.” He applyeth it to their sufferings, wherein though the flesh lost something, yet the spirit got much more.

men of this world know the sweets that saints enjoy in afflictions, they would rather choose Manasseh's iron chain, than his golden crown ; they would rather be Paul a *prisoner*, than Paul caught up to the third heaven. For light afflictions, they shall have a weight of glory ; for a few afflictions, they shall have those joys, pleasures, and comforts, that are as the stars of heaven, or as the sands of the sea, that cannot be numbered ; for momentary afflictions,* they shall have an eternal crown of glory. "It is but winking, and thou shalt be in heaven presently," said the martyr. Oh ! therefore, let not afflictions nor troubles induce you to shun the ways of God, nor to quit that service that ought to be dearer to you than a world, yea than your very life.

CHAPTER III.

The third Device of Satan to hinder souls from holy and heavenly services, and religious performances, is,

By presenting to the soul the difficulty of performing them ; saith Satan, it is a hard and difficult thing to pray spiritually, and wait on God constantly, and walk with God closely, and to be as lively, warm, and active in the communion of saints, as you should ; it were better ten thousand times to neglect these duties, than to meddle with them ; and doubtless by this Device Satan keeps off thousands from waiting upon God, and giving him that service which is due to his name.—Now the Remedies against this Device of Satan are these :

Remedy I. Dwell more upon the necessity of the service, and duty, that on the difficulty that attends

* Though the cross be bitter, yet it is but short ; a little storm, as one said of Julian's persecution, and an eternal calm follows.

it; you should reason thus with your soul, " Oh ! my soul, though these services are hard and difficult, yet are they not exceedingly necessary for the honour of God, and the keeping up his name in the world ; for the subduing of sin, and the strengthening of weak graces ; for the reviving of languishing comforts, and for the keeping clear and bright your blessed evidences ; for the scattering of your fears, and for the raising of your hopes ; for the gladening the hearts of the righteous, and stopping the mouths of unrighteous souls, who are ready to take all advantages to blaspheme the name of God, and throw dirt and contempt on his people and ways ? Oh ! never leave thinking on the necessity of these duties, till your souls are lifted up far above all the difficulties that attend them."

Rem. II. Solemnly consider, that the Lord Jesus will make his services easy to you, by the sweet discovery of himself to your souls, whilst you are in his service. " Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways," as the Prophet Isaiah saith.* If meeting with God, who is goodness itself, sweetness itself, beauty itself, strength itself, glory itself, will not sweeten his service to thy soul, nothing in heaven or earth will.

Jacob's meeting with, and enjoying of Rachel, made his hard service easy and delightful to him ; and will not the enjoyment of God, and meeting with God, render his service to the soul much more easy and delightful ? Doubtless it will. The Lord will give that sweet assistance by his Spirit and grace,

* Most take the word here to meet a soul with those bowels of love and tenderness, as the father of the Prodigal met the Prodigal with. God is " the Father of compassion," he is as swift to shew mercy, as he is slow to anger.

as shall make his service joyous, and not grievous, a delight, and not a burden ; a little heaven to believing souls. The confidence of this divine assistance raised up Nehemiah's spirit far above all those difficulties and discouragements that attended him in the work of the Lord,* as you may see in Neh. ii. 19, 20. Ah, souls ! while you are in the very service of the Lord, you will find by experience, that the God of heaven will prosper, encourage, and strengthen you, and carry you through the hardest services, with the greatest cheerfulness that can be. Remember this, that God will suit your strength to your work, and in the hardest service you shall have the greatest assistance.

Rem. III. Dwell upon the hard and difficult things that the Lord Jesus Christ hath past through for your temporal, spiritual, and eternal good. Ah : what a sea of blood, wrath, sin, sorrow, and misery, did the Lord Jesus go through for your internal, and eternal good ?† Christ did not plead, This cross is too heavy for me to bear, this wrath is too great for me to lie under, this cup, (which hath in it all the ingredients of Divine displeasure) is too bitter for me to drink, even to the very dregs of it ! No, Christ pleads not the difficulty of the service, but resolutely and bravely goes through all, as the Prophet Isaiah shews, “ The Lord God hath opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, neither

* Luther spake excellently to Melancthon, who was apt to be discouraged with doubts and difficulties, “and fear from foes, and to ease the service they had undertaken. If the work be not good, why did we ever own it ? If it be good, why should we ever decline it ? Why, saith he, should we fear the conquered world, that have Christ the conqueror on our side ? Isai. xl. ult.

† “ It is not fit, since the head was crowned with thorns, that the members should be crowned with rose buds,” saith Zanchius.

turned away back, I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair ; I hid not my face from shame and spitting." Christ shrinks not from his Father's wrath, the burthen of your sins, the malice of Satan, and the rage of the world ; but cheerfully and triumphantly passes through all. Ah, souls ! if this consideration will not raise you above all the discouragements you meet with, to own Christ and his service, and to cleave to them both, I am afraid nothing will. A soul that is not lifted up by this, to be resolute and brave in the service of God, notwithstanding all dangers and difficulties, is a soul left of God to much blindness and hardness.

Rem. IV. Consider, that religious duties, holy and heavenly exercises, are only difficult to the ignoble part of a saint : they are not to the noble and better part, the soul, and renewed affections of a saint : holy exercises are a heavenly pleasure and recreation, as the Apostle speaks, " I delight in the Law of God, after the inward man : with my mind I serve the Law of God, though with my flesh the law of sin." To the noble part of a saint, *Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden is light* ; all the commands and ways of Christ, (even those that tend to the pulling out right eyes, and cutting off right hands) are joyous, and not grievous ; all the ways and services of Christ, are pleasantness (in the abstract) to the better part of a saint. A saint, so far as he is renewed, is always best when he sees and tastes most of God, when he is highest in the enjoyments of God, and most warm and lively in his service. Oh ! saith the saint, that it might be always thus : Oh ! that my strength were the strength of stones, and my flesh as brass, that my worse part might be more serviceable to my noble part, that I might act by an unwearied power

in that service, that is a pleasure, a Paradise to me.

Rem. V. Solemnly consider the great reward and glorious recompence that attend those who cleave to the service of the Lord, in the face of all difficulties and discouragements ; though the work be hard, yet the reward is great : heaven will make amends for all : yes, one hour in heaven will abundantly recompense you for cleaving to the Lord and his ways, in the face of all difficulties.* This carried the Apostle through the greatest difficulties : “ he had an eye to the recompence of reward ; he looked for a house that had foundations, whose builder and maker is God, and for a heavenly country,” yea, this bore up the spirit of Christ, in the face of all difficulties and discouragements. “ Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Christians that would hold on in the service of the Lord, must look more upon the crown, than the cross ; more upon their future glory, than their present misery ; more upon their encouragements, than their discouragements. God’s very service is wages ; his ways are strewed with roses, and paved with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory ; and with peace that passeth understanding. Some degree of comfort follows every good action ; as heat accompanies fire, and as beams and influences issue from the sun. “ Moreover, by them is thy servant

* Basil speaks of some martyrs that were cast out all night naked, in a cold frosty time, and were to be burned the next day, how they comforted themselves in this manner, The winter is sharp, but Paradise is sweet ; here we shiver for cold, but the bosom of Abraham will make amends for all.

warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward ; " not *for* keeping, but *in* keeping of them, there is great reward ; the joy, the refreshing, the comforts, the contents, the smiles, the incomes that saints now enjoy in the ways of God, are so precious and glorious in their eyes, that they would not exchange them for ten thousand worlds. Ah ! if the vails be thus sweet and glorious before pay-day come, what will be that glory that Christ will crown his saints with, for cleaving to his service in the face of all difficulties : when he shall say to his Father, *Lo, here am I, and the children which thou hast given me !* If there be so much to be had in a wilderness, what then shall be had in Paradise ?

CHAPTER IV.

The fourth Device that Satan has to keep souls from holy exercises and religious services, is,

By leading them to make false inferences from those blessed and glorious things that Christ has done for us. As that Jesus Christ hath done all for us, therefore, there is nothing for us to do, but to joy and rejoice ; he hath perfectly justified us, and fulfilled the law, and satisfied divine justice, and pacified his Father's wrath, and is gone to heaven to prepare a place for us, and in the mean time to intercede for us, and therefore away with praying and mourning for sin, and hearing, &c. Ah ! what a world of professors hath Satan drawn in these days from religious services, by leaving them to make such sad, wild, and strange inferences, from the sweet and excellent things the Lord Jesus hath done for his people.—Now the Remedies against this Device, are these :

Remedy I. Dwell as much on those scriptures that shew you the duties and services that Christ

requires of you, as upon those that declare to you the precious and glorious things that Christ hath done for you. It is a sad and a dangerous thing to have two eyes to behold our dignity and privileges, and not one to see our duties and services. I should look with one eye upon the choice and excellent things that Christ hath done for me, to raise up my heart to love Christ with the purest love, and to joy in Christ with the strongest joy, and to exalt Christ above all, who hath made himself to be my all : and I should look with the other eye, upon those services and duties that the scriptures require of those for whom Christ hath done such blessed things : as upon that of the Apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. " What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own ? For ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." And that, 1 Cor. xv. 58. " Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." And that " And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." And that of the Apostle, " Rejoice always, and pray without ceasing." And that in the Philippians, " Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." And that, *This do till I come.* And that, " Let us consider one another, to provoke one another to love, and to good works : not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching," Phil. ii. 12, 13. I Cor. xi. 26. Heb. x. 24, 25. Now a soul that would not be drawn away by this Device of Satan, must not look obliquely upon these blessed scrip-

tures, and abundance more of like import, but he must dwell upon them, and make them his chief and choicest companions ; and this will be a happy means to keep him close to Christ and his service, in those times wherein many turn their backs upon him, under pretence of being highly interested in the great and glorious things that have been wrought by him.

Rem. II. Consider, that the great and glorious things that Jesus Christ hath done, and is doing for us, should be so far from taking us off from religious services, and pious performances, that they should be the greatest motives and encouragements, to the performance of them, as the scriptures abundantly shew. I will produce only a few instances ; as, “ That we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear ; in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives ; Luke i. 74, 75. Christ has freed you from all your enemies, from the curse of the Law, the predominant condemning power of sin, the wrath of God, the sting of death, and the torments of hell ; but what is the end and design of Christ in doing these great and marvellous things for his people ? It is not that they should throw off duties of righteousness and holiness, but that their hearts may be the more free and sweet in all holy duties and heavenly services :* so the Apostle, “ I will be their God, and they shall be my people : and I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” (Observe what follows) “ Having therefore these

* This I am sure of, that all man’s happiness here is holiness, and holiness shall hereafter be his happiness. Christ hath therefore broken the devil’s yoke from off our necks, that his Father might have better service from our hearts.

promises, (dearly beloved) let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. chap. vii. i. compared. And again, *Tit.* ii. 11—14. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Ah, souls ! I know of no arguments to influence you to a lively and constant performance of all heavenly services, like those that are drawn from the consideration of the great and glorious things *that Christ has done for you*; and if such arguments will not win upon you, I think preaching hell-fire to you will never do it.

Rem. III. Seriously consider, that those precious souls which Jesus Christ hath done and suffered as much for, as for you, have been exceedingly active and lively in all religious services and heavenly performances : the saint's motto in all ages hath been, *Let us be doing*. God loves "the runner, not the questioner," or disputant, saith Luther. Christ did indeed suffered as much for David as for you, and yet, who is found more in praying and praising God than David ? *Seven times a day will I praise ye Lord.* Who more in studying and meditating on the word, than David ? *Thy law is my meditation day and night.* The same truth you may run and read, in Jacob, Moses, Job, Daniel, and in the rest of the holy Prophets and Apostles, for whom Christ hath done as much as for you. Ah ! how have all those worthies abounded in works of righ-

teousness and holiness to the praise of free grace ? The day is at hand when God will require of men " not what they have read, but what they have done ; not what they have spoken, but how much they have conquered or overcome." Some say that Christ hath done great and glorious things for us, therefore we need not make conscience of performing such religious services as men say the world calls for : if this logic be not from hell, whence is it ! Ah ! were the holy Prophets and Apostles alive to hear such reasoning come out of the mouths of such as profess themselves to be interested in the great things that Jesus Christ hath done for his chosen ones, how would they blush to look upon such souls ; and how would their hearts grieve and break within them, to hear their language and observe their conduct !

Rem. IV. Consider this, that those who walk not in the ways of righteousness and holiness, (who wait not upon God in the several duties and services that are commanded by him) cannot have that evidence to their own souls of their righteousness before God,* of their fellowship and communion with God, of their blessedness here, and their happiness hereafter, as those persons have, who love and delight in the ways and works of the Lord. " Little children, (saith the Apostle) let no man deceive you ; he that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous." † *In this* (saith the same

* Certainly it is one thing to judge by our graces, another thing to rest, or put our trust in them. There is a great deal of difference between declaring and deserving.

† High words surely make a man neither holy nor just ; but a virtuous life, a circumspect walk, make him dear to God. A tree that is not fruitful, is for the fire. Christianity is not talking, but walking with God, who will not be put off with words ; if he does not find fruit, he will take up his axe, and then the soul is cut off for ever.

Apostle) "the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother: if ye know that he is righteous," (saith the same Apostle) "ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whosoever keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected. Hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin," saith the same Apostle. So *James ii.* "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works, can faith save him? i. e. *It cannot.* For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." To look after holy and heavenly works, is the best way to preserve the soul from being deceived and deluded by Satan's delusions, and by sudden flashes of joy and comfort; holy works being a more sensible and constant pledge of the precious Spirit, begetting and maintaining in the soul more solid, pure, and lasting joy. Ah, souls! if you would have in yourselves a constant and blessed evidence of your fellowship with the Father and the Son, and of the truth of grace, and of your future happiness, look that you are diligent in holy services; and that you turn not your backs upon religious duties.

Rem. V. Solemnly consider, that there are other choice and glorious ends for the saints' performance of religious duties, than the justifying of their

persons before God, or the satisfying the law and justice of God, or the purchasing of the pardon of sin, &c.* viz. To testify their justification: *A good tree cannot but bring forth good fruits;* to testify their love to God, and their sincere obedience to the commands of God; to testify their deliverance from spiritual bondage, and evidence the indwellings of the Spirit; to stop the mouths of the worst of men, and to rejoice those righteous souls that God would not have made sorrowful. These, and abundance of other choice ends there are, why those who have an interest in the glorious work of Christ, should, notwithstanding, keep close to the holy duties and religious services that are commanded by him. And if these considerations will not prevail with you, to wait upon God in holy and heavenly duties, I am afraid, if one should rise from the dead, his arguments would not prevail upon you, but that you would hold on in your sins, and neglect his service, though you perish for ever.

CHAPTER V.

The fifth Device of Satan to draw souls from religious services, and to keep them from holy duties, is,

By presenting to them the poverty, and afflictions of those who walk in the ways of God, and hold on in religious practices. Saith Satan, don't you see that those who walk in religious ways, are the poorest, the meanest, and the most despicable persons in the world? This took with them in *John vii. 47.* "Then answered the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the Rulers, or of the Pharisees

* It is a precious truth, never to be forgotten, "That duties are esteemed not by their acts, but by their ends."

believed on him ? but this people who know not the law are cursed."—Now the remedies against this Device are these that follow :

Remedy I. Consider, that though they are outwardly poor, yet they are inwardly rich; though they are poor in temporals, yet they are rich in spirituals; the worth and riches of the saints are inward : " The king's daughter is all glorious within." " Hearken my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him ?"—"*I know thy poverty, but thou art rich*", saith Christ to the Church at Smyrna. What though they have little in possession, yet they have a glorious kingdom in reversion. " Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Though saints have little in hand yet they have much in hope. You count those happy in a worldly sense, that have much in reversion, though they have but little in possession; and will you count the saints miserable, because they have little in possession, though they have a glorious kingdom in reversion of this ? I am sure the poorest saint that breathes would not exchange (were it in his power) what he has in hope, for the possession of as many worlds as there are stars in the heavens, or sands in the sea.

Rem. II. Consider, that in all ages God has had some who have been great, rich, wise, and honourable, who have chosen his ways and continued in his service in the face of all difficulties; though not many wise men, yet some wise men; and though not many mighty, yet some mighty; and though not many noble, yet some such have served the Lord ;* witness Abraham, and Jacob, and Job,

* Good nobles (saith one) are like black swans, and

and several kings, and others, that the scriptures speak of; and how many have we among ourselves, who have served the Lord, and who have swam to his service through the blood of the slain, and who have not counted their lives dear unto them, that they and others might enjoy the holy things of Christ in his own way.

Rem. III. Solemnly consider, that the spiritual riches of the poorest saints, infinitely transcend the temporal riches of all the wicked men in the world; they can sit down satisfied with the riches of grace that are in Christ, without worldly riches, and honours, &c. “He that drinks of the water that I shall give him, shall thirst no more.” The riches of poor saints are durable, they are ever present with them, they will go to the prison, to a sick bed, yea, to heaven with them. The spiritual riches of poor saints, are as wine to cheer them, as bread to strengthen them, as clothes to warm them, and as armour to protect them. Now all you that know any thing, know, that the riches of this world cannot satisfy the souls of men, that they are as fading as a flower, or as the owners* of them are.

Rem. IV. Consider, that though the saints, considered comparatively, are few; though they are a little, little flock, a remnant; *Luke* xii. 32. “a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed;” *Cant.* iv. 12. though “as the summer gleanings;” or as “one of a city and two of a tribe;” though but a handful to a houseful, a spark to a flame, a drop to the ocean; yet consider them

thinly scattered in the firmament of the state, even like stars of the first magnitude, yet God has had some in all ages.

* Croesus was so rich, that he maintained an army with his own revenues, yet he and his great army, with his son and heir, fell together, and left his great estate to others

simply in themselves, and they are an innumerable company that cannot be numbered, as *Rev.* vii. 9. “After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. So *Matt.* viii. 11. “And I say unto you, that many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” So *Heb.* xii. 22, 23. “But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. To the general assembly, and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.”

Rem. V. Seriously consider, that it will be but as a day before these poor despised saints, who are God’s jewels, will shine brighter than the sun in his glory: they shall soon be lifted up upon their thrones to judge the multitude—the world, as the apostle speaks, “Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?” And in that day, O! how will the great and the rich, the learned and the noble, wish that they had lived and spent their days with these few poor contemptible creatures,* in the

* Mr. Fox, the author of the book of *Martyrs*, being asked, whether he knew a certain poor man who had received succour of him in the time of trouble, answered, “I remember him well, I tell you I forget lords and ladies to remember such.” So will God deal by his poor saints: he will forget the great and mighty ones of the world, to remember his few poor despised ones. Though John was poor in the world, yet the Holy Ghost calls him the greatest that was born of women. Ah, poor saints! men that know not your worth, cannot have such low thoughts of you but the Lord will have as high.

service of the Lord! Oh! how will this wicked world curse the day that ever they had such base thoughts of the poor saints, and that their poverty became a stumbling block, to keep them from the ways of holiness.

I have read of Ingo, an ancient king of the Draves, who making a stately feast, appointed his nobles, at that time pagans, to sit in the hall below, and commanded certain poor Christians to be brought up into his presence-chamber, to sit with him at his table, to eat and drink of his kingly entertainment; at which many wondering, he said, "He accounted Christians, though never so poor, a greater ornament at his table, and more worthy of his company, than the greatest peers unconverted to the Christian faith, for when these might be thrust down to hell, those might be his comforts, and fellow princes in heaven." Although you see the stars sometimes by their reflection in a pool, in the bottom of a well, or in a ditch, yet the stars have their situation in heaven: so, though you see a godly man in a poor, miserable, despised condition, as to the things of this world, yet he is fixed in the region of heaven: "Who hath raised us up, (saith the apostle) and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Oh! therefore say to your own souls, (when they decline the ways of Zion, because of the poverty, &c. of those who walk in them) the day is at hand, when those few, poor, despised saints, shall shine in glory, when they shall judge this world, and when all the wicked thereof will wish that they were in their condition, and would give ten thousand worlds (were it in their power) that they might have the honour and happiness to wait upon those, whom for their meanness they have neglected and despised in this world.

Rem. VI. Consider, that a time will come, even

in this life, when the reproach and contempt that is now cast upon the ways of God, by reason of the poverty, &c. of those that walk in those ways, shall be quite taken away, by his making them the head, who have days without number been the tail, and by his raising them up to much outward riches, prosperity, and glory, who have been as out-casts, because of their poverty and small number.* St. John speaking of the glory of the church, the new Jerusalem that came down from heaven, *Rev.* xxi. tells us, “That the nations of them that are saved, shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory into it.” So the prophet Isaiah, “They shall bring their sons from far, and their silver and their gold with them. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron.” *Ix.* 17. And so the prophet Zechariah speaks, chap. xiv. 14. “And the wealth of all the Heathen round about; shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel in great abundance.” The Lord hath promised that the meek shall inherit the earth: and heaven and earth shall pass away, before one jot or one tittle of his word shall pass unfulfilled. Ah poor saints! now some thrust sore at you, others look shy upon you, others shut the door against you, others turn their backs upon you; and most men (except it be a few

* The following scriptures abundantly confirm this truth: *Jer.* xxxi. 12. *Isa.* xxx. 23. and *lxii.* 8, 9. *Joel* ii. 23, 24. *Micah.* iv. 6. *Amos* ix. 13, 14. *Zech.* viii. 12. *Isa.* xli. 18, 19. *lv.* 13. *lxv.* 21, 22. *lxi.* 4. 10. and *Ezek.* xxxvi. 10. Only take these two cautions, 1. That in these times the saints’ chiefest comforts, delights, and contents, will consist in their more clear, full, and constant enjoyment of God. 2. That they shall have such abundant measure of the Spirit poured out upon them, that their riches and outward glory shall not be snares to them, but golden steps to a richer living in God.

that live much in God, and are filled with the riches of Christ) either neglect or despise you because of your poverty; but the day is coming, when you shall be lifted up above the dunghill, when you shall change poverty for riches, your rags for robes, your reproach for a crown of honour, your infamy for glory, even in this world.

And this is not all, but God will also mightily increase the number of his chosen ones; multitudes shall be converted to him, see Isa. lxvi. 8, 20. Do not the scriptures say, that the kingdoms of this world must become the kingdoms of our Lord? Rev. xi. 15. Has not God given to Christ the Heathen, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession? Has not the Lord said, that in the "last days the mountain of the Lord's house shall be lifted up above the hills, and shall be established in the top of the mountains, and all nations shall flow unto it." Read and meditate upon Isa. ix. and lxvi. and ii. 1—5. and there you shall find multitudes mentioned that shall be converted to Christ; and O, that you may believe, and be mighty in wrestling with God, that he would hasten the day of his glory, that the reproach that is now upon his people and ways may cease!

CHAPTER VI.

The sixth Device of Satan, to keep souls from religious services, is,

By presenting before them the examples of the greatest part of the world who walk in the ways of their own hearts, and who make light of, and slight the ways of the Lord. Saith Satan, don't you see that the great and the rich, the noble and the honorable, the learned and the wise, even the greatest number of men, never trouble themselves about

religious ways,* and why then should you be singular? You had much better do as the generality of men do, &c.—Now the remedies against this Device are these :

Remedy I. Think upon those scriptures which speak against following the sinful examples of man ; as that in Exodus, “ Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil, neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment.” The multitude generally are ignorant, and know not the way of the Lord, therefore they speak evil of that they know not; they are envious, and maliciously bent against the service and ways of God ; and therefore they cannot speak well of them. “ This way is every where spoken against,” say they.† So in *Numb. xvi.* “ Separate from them, and come out from among them.” So the Apostle, “ Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.” So Solomon, “ Enter not into the way of the wicked, forsake the foolish and live.” They who walk with the multitude shall perish with the multitude. They who live and act, as the greater part of men live and act, suffer and lie down in hell with them at last.‡ It is but a little flock (comparatively) to whom the kingdom of heaven is given. “ And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Come out in affection, in action, and in habitation ; for else the infection of sin will bring upon you the infliction of punishment. So saith the wise man,

* John vii. 48, 49. 1 Cor. i. 26—28. Mic. vii. 2, 3, 4.

† The way to hell is broad, and well beaten ; the way to be undone for ever, is to do as the most do ; “ The multitude is the weakest and worst argument,” saith Seneca, *Prov. iv. 14. ix. 6.*

‡ Sin and punishment are linked together with chains of adamant.

" He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but companion of fools shall be destroyed," or, as the Hebrew expresses it, shall be broken in pieces. Multitudes may help you into sin; yea, one may draw you into it, but multitudes cannot help you to escape punishment: as you may see in Moses and Aaron, who were provoked to sin by the multitude; but were shut out of the pleasant land, and fell by a hand of justice as well as others.

Rem. II. Solemnly consider the worth and excellency of your soul. It is a jewel worth more than heaven and earth. The loss of your soul is irreparable, and irrecoverable; if that be lost, all is lost, and you are undone for ever. Is it madness and folly in a man to kill himself for company? And is it not greater madness or folly to destroy your soul, and damn it for company? Suspect that way wherein you see multitudes walk, the multitude being a stream that you must row hard against, or you will be carried into that gulf, out of which angels cannot deliver thee. Is it not better to walk* in a straight way alone, than to wander into crooked ways with company? Sure it is better to go to heaven alone, than to hell with a multitude.

I might add other things, but these may suffice for the present, and I am afraid, if these arguments do not stir you, others will have but little effect.

CHAPTER VII.

The seventh Device of Satan to keep souls from holy exercises and religious services, is,

By casting in a multitude of vain thoughts, whilst the soul is seeking God, or waiting upon him; and

* What wise man would take gold out of a red hot crafieble, or hazard his immortal soul, (to gain the world) by following a multitude in those steps that lead to the chambers of death and darkness.

by this Device he has cooled some men's spirits in heavenly services, and taken off (at least for a time) many precious souls from religious performances. I have (say some) no heart to hear or pray, nor any delight in reading, nor in the society of the saints, &c. Satan so follows me, and casts in such a multitude of vain thoughts concerning God, the world, my own soul, &c. that I even tremble to think of waiting upon God in any religious service. Oh ! the vain thoughts that Satan casts in, do so grieve, vex, perplex, and distract my soul, that they even make me weary of holy duties, yea, of my very life ; Oh ! I cannot be so raised and enraptured, so heated and melted, so quickened and enlarged, so comforted and refreshed, as I should be, as I might be, and as I would be in religious services, because of the multitude of vain thoughts that Satan injects into my soul,—Now the remedies against this Device of Satan are these :

Remedy I. Pray that your hearts may be strongly affected with the greatness, holiness, majesty, and glory, of that God before whom you stand, and with whom your souls converse in religious services. A man would be afraid of playing with a feather, when he is speaking with a king : ah ! when men have poor, low thoughts of God, in drawing near to him, they tempt the devil to bestir himself, and to cast in a multitude of vain thoughts to disturb and distract them in waiting upon God. There is nothing will contribute so much to keep out such thoughts, as to look upon God as an omniscient, an omnipresent, an omnipotent God, a God full of all glorious perfections, a God whose majesty, purity, and glory, will not suffer him to behold the least iniquity. The reason why the blessed saints and glorious angels in heaven have not so much as one vain thought, is,

because they are greatly affected with the greatness, holiness, majesty, and glory of God.

Rem. II. Be earnest in religious services, notwithstanding all the wandering thoughts your soul may be troubled with. This will be a sweet help to the soul in waiting upon God, whether it is troubled with vain thoughts or not. To say, Well I will pray, and hear, and meditate, and keep fellowship with the saints still ; many precious souls can say from experience, that when their souls have been earnest in waiting upon God, Satan has left them, and has not been so busy in vexing their souls : when Satan perceives that all those trifling thoughts that he casts into the soul, do but make it more diligent, careful, and watchful, in holy and heavenly services, and that the soul loses nothing of its zeal, piety, and devotion, but doubles its care, diligence, and earnestness, he often ceases to interpose with his trifles : as he ceased to tempt Christ, when Christ was resolute in resisting his temptations.

Rem. III. Consider, that those vain and trifling thoughts that are cast into our souls, when we are waiting upon God in any religious service, if they are not cherished and indulged, but abhorred, resisted and disclaimed, are not sins upon our souls. Though they may be troubles to our minds, they shall not be charged upon our consciences, nor keep mercies and blessings from our enjoyment. It is not Satan's casting in vain thoughts that can keep mercy from the soul, or undo the soul, but the lodging and cherishing of vain thoughts ; " O Jerusalem, how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee ?" Jer. iv. 14. Heb. in the midst of thee. They pass through the best hearts, they are lodged and cherished only in the worst. When a soul in uprightness can look God in the face, and say, ' Lord, when I approach near unto thee, there

is a world of vain thoughts crowd in upon me, which disturb my soul, and weaken my faith, lessen my comfort and spiritual strength; Oh! these are my clog, my burden, my torment, my trouble; Oh! do justice upon these, free me from them, that I may serve thee with more freedom, spirituality, and sweetness of spirit. *These thoughts may vex that soul, but they shall not hurt it, nor keep a blessing from it.* If vain thoughts resisted and lamented, could stop the current of mercy, and render a soul unhappy, there are none on earth who could ever taste of mercy, nor be everlastingly happy.

Rem. IV. Solemnly consider that watching against and resisting sinful thoughts, lamenting and weeping over them, carries with it the sweetest and strongest evidence of the truth and power of grace, and of the sincerity of your hearts, and is the readiest and the surest way to be rid of them. Many low and carnal considerations may induce men to watch their words, their lives, their actions; as hope of gain, to please friends, or to get a name in the world, and many other such like considerations. But to watch our thoughts, to weep and lament over them must needs be from some noble, spiritual, and eternal principle; as love to God, holy fear, holy care and delight to please the Lord, &c. The schools do well observe, that outward sins are of *great infamy*; but inward, heart sins, are of *greater guilt*; as we see in the devils. There is nothing that so clearly shews a man to be truly wrought upon, as his having his thoughts brought into obedience, as the apostle speaks, 2 Cor. x. 4 5. When sinful thoughts arise, then think thus, the Lord takes notice of them, *He knows them afar off*, as the Psalmist speaks. He knew Herod's bloody thoughts, and Judas's betraying thoughts,

and the Pharisees' cruel and blasphemous thoughts, afar off. Oh ! think thus, all these sinful thoughts that defile and pollute the soul, they deface and spoil much of the inward beauty and glory of it ; if I commit this or that sin, to which my thoughts incline me, then either I must repent, or not repent ; if I repent, it will cost me more grief, sorrow, shame, heart-breaking, and soul-bleeding,* before my conscience will be quieted, my comfort and joy restored, my evidences cleared, and my pardon in the court of conscience sealed, than the imagined profit, or seeming sensual pleasure, can be worth : What fruit had ye in those things whereof we are now ashamed ?"

If I never repent, Oh ! then my sinful thoughts will be scorpions that will eternally sting me, rods that will eternally lash me, thorns that will everlastingly prick me, daggers that will be eternally stabbing me, the worm that will be for ever gnawing me :† Oh ! therefore, watch against them, be constant in resisting, lamenting, and praying over them, and then they shall not hurt thee, though they may for a time trouble thee ; and remember he that does this, does more than the most glittering and noisy hypocrite in the world.

Rem. V. Labour more and more to be filled with the fulness of God, and to be enriched with all spiritual and heavenly things. What is the reason that the angels in heaven have not so much as an idle thought ? It is because they are filled with the fulness of God. Take it for an experimental truth, the more the soul is filled with the fulness of God,

* Tears instead of gems were the ornaments of David's bed, when he had sinned, and so they must be thine, or else thou must lie down in the bed of sorrow for ever.

† Inward bleeding kills many a man ; so will sinful thoughts, if not repented of.

and enriched with spiritual and heavenly things, the less room there is in that soul for vain thoughts. The fuller the vessel is of wine, the less room there is for water. Oh! then lay up much of God, of Christ, of precious promises, and choice experiences in your hearts, and then you will be less troubled with vain thoughts. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things."

Rem. VI. Keep up holy and spiritual affections; for such as your affections are, such will be your thoughts. "O how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day!" What we love most, we most muse upon: "When I awake, I am still with thee." That which we like much we shall mind much. They that are frequent in their love to God and his law, will be frequent in thinking of God and his law; a child will not forget its mother.—*Rem. VII.*

Rem. VII. Avoid multiplicity of worldly business.* Oh! let not the world take up your hearts and thoughts at other times. Souls that are torn in pieces with the cares of the world, will be always vexed and tormented with vain thoughts, in all their approaches to God: vain thoughts will intrude themselves upon him that lives in a crowd of business. The stars which have the least circuit are nearest the pole; and men that are least perplexed with business, are often nearest to God.

CHAPTER VIII.

The eighth Device of Satan to hinder souls from religious services, and holy performances, is, By persuading them to rest satisfied in their performances. To rest in prayer, and to rest in hearing,

* 2 Tim. ii. 4. *EMPLEKETAI*, is entangled; it is a comparison which St. Paul borrows from the custom of the Roman empire, wherein soldiers were forbidden to engage in other men's business, to undertake husbandry or merchandise, &c.

reading, and communion of saints, &c. And when Satan has drawn the soul to rest upon the service done, then, he will help it to reason thus : Why, it were as good never to pray, as to pray, and rest in prayer, as good never to hear, as to hear, and rest in hearing ; as good never to be in the communion of saints, as to rest in the communion of saints. And by this Device he stops many in their heavenly race, and takes them off from those services that should be their joy and delight.—Now the Remedies against this device are these :

Remedy I. Dwell much upon the imperfections and weaknesses that attend your choicest services. Pride and high confidence are most apt to creep in upon duties well done, saith one. O, the spots and blemishes that are to be seen upon the face of our fairest duties ! When you have done all thou canst, you have need to close all with this petition, “ O enter not into judgement with thy servant, O Lord,” for the weaknesses that cleave to my best services ! We may all say with the church of old, “ all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,” Isa. lxiv. 6. If God should be strict to mark what is done amiss in our best actions, we are undone. Oh ! the water that is mingled with our wine, the dross that cleaves unto our gold.

Rem. II. Consider the insufficiency and inability of any of your best services, divinely to comfort, refresh, and bear your souls up from fainting, and sinking in the day of trouble, when darkness is round about you, when God shall say to you, as he did once to the Israelites, “ Go and cry unto the gods that you have chosen, let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation,” Judg. x. 14. So when God shall say in the day of your trouble, go to your prayers, to your hearing, and to your fasting, &c. and see if they can help you, if they can support

you, if they can deliver you. If God in that day doth but withhold the influence of his grace from thee, thy former services will be but poor cordials to comfort thee: and then thou must, and wilt cry out, Oh! *none but Christ, none but Christ.* Oh! my prayers are not Christ, my hearing is not Christ, my fasting is not Christ, &c. Oh! one smile of Christ, one glimpse of Christ, one good word from Christ, one token of love from Christ in the day of trouble and darkness, will more revive and refresh the soul, than all former services in which your souls rested, as if they were the bosom of Christ, which should be the only centre of our souls. Christ is the crown of crowns, the glory of glories, and the heaven of heavens!

Rem. III. Solemnly consider, that good things rested upon, will as certainly undo us, and everlastingly destroy us, as the greatest enormities that can be committed by us. Those souls, who, after they have done all, do not look up as high as Christ, and rest, and centre alone in him, laying down their services at his footstool, must lie down in sorrow, their bed is prepared for them in hell, *Isa. 1. ult.* “Behold all ye that kindle a fire, and compass yourselves with the sparks, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled, this ye shall have at mine hands, ye shall lie down in sorrow.” *Is it good dwelling with everlasting burnings, with a devouring fire?* If it be, why then rest in your duties still; if otherwise, then see that you centre only in the bosom of Christ.

Rem. IV. Dwell much upon the necessity and excellency of that resting place that God has provided for you, above all other resting places—Himself, his free mercy and love, is your resting place; the pure, glorious, matchless, and spotless righteousness of Christ, is your resting place. Ah!

It is sad to think, that most men have forgotten their resting place, as the Lord complains, *Jer. 1. 6.* " My people have been as lost sheep, their shepherds have caused them to go astray, and have turned them away to the mountains. They have gone from mountain to hill, and forgotten their resting place." So poor souls that see not the excellency of that resting place that God hath appointed for their souls to lie down in, they wander from mountain to hill, from one duty to another, and here they will rest and there they will rest, but those who see the excellency of that resting place that God hath provided for them, will say, Farewell my trusting in prayer, or hearing, or fasting, &c. I will rest, no more in you, but now I will rest only in the bosom of Christ, the love, the righteousness of Christ.

PART III.

The several Devices of Satan to keep souls in a sad, doubting, questioning, and uncomfortable condition.

THOUGH he can never rob believers of their crown, yet such is his malice and envy, that he will leave no stone unturned, no means unattempted, to rob them of their comfort and peace,* to make their life a burden and a misery unto them, to cause them to spend their days in sorrow and mourning, in sighing and complaining, in doubting and questioning: surely we have no interest in Christ, our graces are not true; our hopes are the hopes of hypocrites; our confidence is our presumption; our enjoyments are our delusions.

I shall shew you this in some particulars.

CHAPTER I.

The first Device of Satan to keep souls in a sad doubting, and questioning condition, and so making their life a pain, is,

By causing them to be still poring and musing upon sin; to mind their sins more than their

* Bradford, the martyr, in one of his epistles saith thus: O Lord, sometimes methinks I feel it so with me, as if there were no difference between my heart and the wicked; I have as blind a mind as they, as stout, stubborn, rebellious, and hard heart as they, &c.

Saviour;* yea, so to mind their sins, as to forget and neglect their Saviour, as the Psalmist speaks, "The Lord is not in all their thoughts." Their eyes are so fixed upon their disease, that they cannot see the Remedy though it be near; and so they muse upon their debts, that they have neither mind nor heart to think upon their surety,—Now the Remedies against this Device are these:

Remedy I. Weak believers should consider, that though Jesus Christ has not freed them from the being of sin, yet he has freed them from the damnable power of sin. It is most true, that sin and grace were never born together, neither shall sin and grace die together; yet while a believer breathes in this world, they may live together, they may keep house together. Christ in this life may not free a believer from the presence of any one sin, though he free all believers from the damning power of every sin.† "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The law cannot accuse a believer, for Christ has fulfilled it for him; Divine justice cannot punish him, for Christ has satisfied it; his sins cannot condemn him, for they are pardoned in the blood of Christ; and his own conscience (upon righteous grounds) cannot condemn him, because Christ, who is greater than his conscience has acquitted him.

Rem. II. Consider, that though Jesus Christ

* A Christian should wear Christ in his bosom, as a flower of delight, for he is a whole Paradise of delight; he that minds not Christ more than his sin, can never be so thankful and fruitful as he should.

† "My sins hurt me not if they like me not." Sin is like that wild fig-tree, or ivy in the wall, cut off stump, body, bough, and branches, yet some strings or other will sprout out again, till the wall be pulled down.

have not freed you from the molesting, and vexing power of sin, yet he has freed you from the reign and dominion of sin.* You say that sin so molests and vexes you, that you cannot think of God, nor go to God, nor speak with God: Oh! but remember, it is one thing for sin to molest and vex you, and another thing for sin to reign and have dominion over you. *Rom.* vi. 14. "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Sin may rebel, but it shall never reign in a saint. It fares with sin in the regenerate, as with those beasts that Daniel speaks of, "That had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season, and a time," *Dan.* vii. 12.

Now sin reigns in the soul, when the soul *willingly and readily obeys it*, and submits to its commands, as subjects actively obey and embrace the commands of their prince. The commands of a king are readily embraced and obeyed by his subjects; but the commands of a tyrant are embraced and obeyed unwillingly. All the service that is done to a tyrant, is out of violence, and not out of obedience. A free and willing subjection to the commands of sin, manifests a soul to be under its reign and dominion; but from this plague, this hell, Christ frees all believers. Sin cannot say of a believer, as the centurion said of his servants, "I bid one go and he goeth, and say to another, come, and he cometh, and to another do this, and he doeth it." No, the heart of a saint, rises against the commands of sin, and when his sins would carry his soul to the devil, he hales them before the Lord, and cries out for justice. "Lord," saith the believing soul,

* The primitive Christians chose rather to be thrown to lions without, than left to lusts within, saith T^rtullian.

"sin plays the tyrant in me; it would have me to do that which makes against thy holiness, as well as my happiness; against thy honour and glory, as well as my comfort and peace; therefore do me justice thou righteous Judge of heaven and earth, and let this tyrant sin die for it."

Rem. III. Constantly keep an eye upon the promises of remission of sin, as well as upon the inward operations of sin. This is a most certain truth, that God will graciously pardon those sins to his people, that he will not in this life fully subdue in them. Paul prays thrice (i. e. often) to be delivered from the thorn in the flesh, all he can get is, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" I will graciously subdue that in thee, that I will not remove from thee, saith God. "And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me, and whereby they have transgressed against me;" I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Ah! lamenting souls, who spend your days in sighing and groaning under the sense and burden of your sins, why do you deal so unkindly with God, and so injuriously with your own souls, as not to cast an eye upon those precious promises of remission of sin, which may bear up and refresh your spirits in the darkest night, and under the heaviest burden of sin.

Rem. IV. Look upon all your sins, as charged upon the account of Christ, as debts which the Lord Jesus has fully satisfied; and indeed were there but one farthing of that debt unpaid, which Christ was engaged to discharge, it would not have

* Isa. xliv. 22. Mic. vii. 18, 19. Col. ii. 13, 14. The promises of God are a precious book, every leaf drops myrrh and mercy. Though the weak Christian cannot open, read, and apply them, Christ can and will apply them to their souls.

stood with the unspotted justice of God, to have received him into heaven, and given him to sit down at his own right hand : but all our debts by his death being discharged ; we are freed, and he is exalted to sit down at the right hand of his Father, which is the summit of his glory, and the greatest pledge of our happiness : " For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," saith the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 21. All our sins were made to meet upon Christ, as the evangelical prophet hath it. Isa. liii. 5, 6. " He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all," or as the Hebrew has it, " He hath made the iniquity of us all to meet in him." I must not sit down discouraged under the apprehensions of those debts, that Christ to the utmost farthering hath fully discharged. Would it not argue much weakness, I had almost said much madness, for a debtor to sit down discouraged, upon looking over those debts that his surety has readily, freely and fully paid ? The sense of his great love should engage a man for ever to love and honour his surety, and to bless that hand that has paid the debt, and crossed the books. But to set down discouraged when the debt is discharged, is a sin that needs repentance.

Christ has cleared all reckonings between God and us. You remember the scape-goat, " Upon his head all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, were confessed and put, and the goat did bear upon him all their iniquities, &c." Lev. xvi. 21. Why,

the Lord Jesus is that blessed scape-goat upon whom all our sins were laid, and who alone hath carried "our sins away into the land of forgetfulness, where they shall never be remembered more." A believer under the guilt of his sin, may look the Lord in the face, and sweetly plead thus with him : "It is true, Lord, I owed thee much, but thy Son was my ransom, my redemption ; HIS BLOOD WAS THE PRICE, he was my surety, and undertook to answer for my sins ; I know thou must be satisfied, and Christ hath satisfied thee to the utmost farthing ; not for himself, for what sins hath he of his own ? but for me, they were my debts that he satisfied for ; be pleased to look over the book, and thou shalt find that it is crossed by thine own hand, upon this very account, that Christ* hath suffered, and satisfied for them."

CHAPTER II.

The second Device of Satan to know souls in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition, is,

By helping them to make false definitions of their graces : Satan knows, that as false definitions of sin wrong the soul one way, so false definitions of grace wrong the soul another.

I will instance only respecting Faith : Oh ! how Satan labours with all his power, to lead men to make false definitions of faith ? Some he persuades to define faith *too high* ; as that it is a full assurance of the love of God to a man's soul in particular, or a full persuasion of the pardon and remission of a

* The bloods of Abel, for so the Hebrew hath it,) as if the blood of one Abel had as many tongues as drops) cried for vengeance against sin ; but the blood of Christ cries louder for the pardon of sin.

man's own sins in particular. Saith Satan, "What dost thou talk of faith? Faith is an assurance of the love of God, and of the pardon of sin, and this thou hast not; thou knowest thou art far off from this, therefore thou hast no faith." And by leading men to make such a false definition of faith, he keeps them in a sad doubting condition, which makes them spend their days in sorrow, so that grief and sorrow are their meat and drink, and sighing is their work all the day.

If we should define a man to be a living man, only by the highest and strongest demonstrations of life, as laughing, leaping, running, working, walking &c. would not many thousands that groan under internal and external weaknesses, and who can neither laugh, nor leap, nor run, nor work, nor walk, be found dead men by such a definition, who we yet know to be alive? It is just so in the matter of assurance.—Now the Remedies against this Device are these:

Remedy I. Solemnly consider, that there may be true Faith, yea, a great measure of faith, where there is not assurance. The Canaanitish woman in the gospel had strong faith, yet no assurance that we read of. "These things have I written unto you" (saith St. John) "that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that we have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." In these words you see they were believers, and had eternal life, in respect of the purpose and promise of God, and in respect of the seeds and beginnings of it in their souls; and in respect of Christ their head, who sits in heaven as a public person, representing all his chosen ones, "Who hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," Eph. ii. 6. and yet they did not know that they had eternal

life. It is one thing to have a right to heaven, and another thing to know it ; it is one thing to be beloved, and another thing for a man to know that he is beloved. It is one thing for God to write a man's name in the book of life, and another for God to tell him that his name is written therein ; and to say to him, *Rejoice, because thy name is written in heaven.* So St. Paul, " In whom ye also trusted, after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise." So Micah, *Mic. vii. 8, 9.* " Rejoice not against me, O my enemy, when I fall, I shall arise ; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me ; I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him," &c. or, *The sad countenance of God,* as the Hebrew hath it. This soul had no assurance, for he sat in darkness, and was under the sad countenance of God, and yet had strong faith ; as appears in those words, " When I fall, I shall arise ; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me," He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness. And let this suffice for the first answer.

Rem. II. Solemnly consider, how God in the scripture defines Faith. God defines faith to be a receiving of Christ : (*John i. 12.* " As many as received him, to them gave he power, to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name ;") to be a cleaving of the soul unto God, though nothing but afflictions attend it.* To be coming to God in Christ, and often arresting, staying, or rolling of the soul upon Christ. It is safest and best to define as God defines, both vices and

* Mat. xi. 28. John vi. 37. Heb. vii. 25, 26. Isa. l. 10.
Psal. xxxvii. 5, &c.

graces: this is the only way to settle the soul, and to secure it against the wiles of men and devils, who labour by false definitions of grace, to keep precious souls in a doubting and languishing condition, and so make their lives a burden and a misery unto them.

Rem. III. Seriously consider this, that there may be true Faith where there is much doubting; witness those frequent sayings of Christ to his disciples, *Why are ye afraid, O ye of little faith?** Persons may be true believers who are subject to doubt: in the same persons (that the forementioned scriptures speak of) you may see their faith commended, and their doubts condemned, which necessarily supposes a presence of both.

Rem. IV. Consider, that assurance is *an effect of Faith*, therefore it cannot be faith. The cause cannot be the effect, nor the root the fruit, as the effect flows from the cause, the fruit from the root, the stream from the fountain, so does assurance flow from faith. This truth I shall prove thus:

The assurance of our salvation and pardon of sin primarily arises from the witness of the Spirit of God, that we are the children of God; *Eph. i. 13.* and the Spirit never witnesses this till we are believers; *For we are sons by faith in Christ Jesus:* *Gal. iv. 6.* therefore assurance is not faith, but follows it, as the effect follows the cause.

Again, No man can be assured and persuaded of his salvation, till he is united to Christ, till he is ingrafted into Christ; and a man cannot be ingrafted into Christ till he has faith. He must first be ingrafted into Christ by faith, before he can have assurance of his salvation; which shews clearly that assurance is not faith, but an effect and fruit of faith.

* Mat. vi. 30. xiv. 31. and xvi. 8. Luke xii. 28.

Again, A man must first have faith before he can have assurance ; therefore assurance is not faith. That a man must first have faith before he can have assurance, is clear, for he must first be saved, before he can be assured of his salvation ; because he cannot be assured of that which is not : and a man must first have saving faith, before he can be saved by faith ; for he cannot be saved by that which he hath not ; therefore a man must first have faith, before he can have assurance, and so it evidently follows, that assurance is not faith.

CHAPTER III.

The third Device that Satan has to keep the soul in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition, is,

By inclining the soul to make false inferences from the cross dealings of providence. Saith Satan, “ Do you not see how providence crosses your prayers and desires, your tears, hopes, and endeavours ?* Surely if his love were toward you, if his soul did delight and take pleasure in you, he would not deal thus with you ?”—Now the Remedies against this Device are these :

Remedy I. Solemly consider, that many things may be cross to our desires, that are not cross to our good. Abraham, Jacob, David, Job, Moses, Jeremiah, Jonah, Paul, &c. met with many things contrary to their desires and endeavours, that were not contrary to their good, as all know, who have wisely compared desires and endeavours, and God’s actions together. Physic often acts contrary to the patient’s desire, when it does not work contrary to his good.

* Psal. lxxvii. 7, 11. lxxxvi. 1. ult. and lxxiii. 2, 23.

Rem. II. Solemnly consider, that the *hand* or God may be against a man, when the *love and heart* of God is much set upon him. No man can conclude how the heart of God stands, by his hand. God's providential hand may be with persons, when his heart is set against them. God's providential hand was for a time with Saul, Haman, Ashur, and Jehu, and yet his heart was set against them. "No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before him," Eccl. ix. 1, 2. The hand of God was against Ephraim, and yet his love, his heart, was dearly set upon him, *Jer. xxxi. 18, 19, 20.* "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God. Surely, after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh, I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Ephraim is my dear son, he is a pleasant child, for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still. Therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord."

God can look sourly, chide bitterly, and strike heavily, even where, and when he loves dearly. The hand of God was very much against Job, and yet his heart was very much set upon him, as you may see by comparing chap i. and ii. with xli. and xlvi. The hand of God was sore against David and Jonah, when his heart was much set upon them. He that shall conclude, that the heart of God is against those that his hand is against, will condemn the generation of the just, whom God would not have condemned.

Rem. III. Consider, that all the cross providences that befall the saints, are but in order to some great good, that God intends to confer upon them. Providence wrought cross to David's desire, in taking away the child, but yet not cross to greater good; for was it not far better for David to have such a legitimate heir as Solomon, than that a bastard should wear the crown and sway the sceptre?

Joseph you know was sold into a far country by the envy and malice of his brethren, and afterwards imprisoned because he would not yield to his mistress' lusts; yet all these providences wonderfully conduced to his advancement, and the preservation of his father's family, which was then the visible church of Christ. It was so ordered by a noble hand of providence, that what they sought to decline, they promoted. Joseph was therefore sold by his brethren, that he might not be worshipped, and yet he was therefore worshipped because he was sold!

David was designed to a kingdom, but Oh, the straits, troubles, and deaths that he run through before he felt the weight of the crown: and all this was but in order to sweeten his crown, and settle it more firmly and gloriously upon his head. God so contrived it, that Jonah's offence, and those cross actings of his that attended it, should promote that end which they seemed most directly to oppose: Jonah flies to Tarshish, then is cast into the sea, then saved by a miracle. Then the mariners (as is probable) who cast Jonah into the sea, declared to the Ninevites what had happened; therefore he must be a man sent of God, and his threatenings must be believed and hearkened to; and therefore they must repent, and humble

themselves, that the wrath threatened might not be executed.*

Rem. IV. Seriously consider, that all the strange, dark, deep, and changeable providences, that believers meet with, shall further them in their way to heaven, in their journey to happiness. Divine wisdom and love will so order all things here below: and they shall work for the real, internal, and eternal good of them that love him. All the rugged providences that David met with, contributed to bring him to the throne. And all the uncomfortable providences Daniel and the *three children* met with, contributed to their great advancement. So all the disappointing providences believers meet with, shall all contribute to lift up their souls above all things below God. As the waters lifted up Noah's ark nearer heaven; and as the stones wherewith Stephen was slain, were only instruments of conveying his soul more speedily into Christ's presence-chamber; so every trying providence we meet with in this life, being sanctified, shall be instrumental of raising us nearer to heaven, and the enjoyment of Christ.

CHAPTER IV.

The fourth Device that Satan has to keep souls in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition, is,

By suggesting to them, that their graces are not true, but counterfeit. Saith Satan, "All is not gold that glitters, all is not free grace that you count and call grace. That which you call faith, is but fancy; and that which you call zeal, is but

* The motions of divine providence are so dark, so deep, so changeable, that the wisest and noblest souls cannot tell what conclusions to make.

unnatural heat and passion; and that light you have, is but common, it is short to what many have attained to, who are now in hell, &c." Satan does not labour more mightily to persuade hypocrites that their graces are true, when they are counterfeit, than he does to persuade precious souls that their graces are counterfeit, when indeed they are true, and such as will abide the touchstone of Christ.*— Now the Remedies against this Device of Satan are these :

Remedy I. Seriously consider, that grace is taken two ways.

1. It is taken for the gracious good will and favour of God, whereby he is pleased of his own free love to accept of sinners, in Christ for his own. This grace some call the first grace, because it is the fountain of all other graces, and the spring from whence they flow, and it is therefore called grace, because it makes a man gracious before God ; but this is only in God.

2. Grace is taken for the gifts of grace, and they are of two sorts, common or special.

Some are common to believers and hypocrites, as a gift of knowledge, a gift of prayer, &c.

Some are special graces, and they are proper and peculiar to the saints, as faith, humility, meekness, love, patience, &c. *Gal. v. 22, 23.*

Rem. II. Wisely consider the differences between renewing grace, and restraining grace ; between sanctifying grace, and temporary grace ; and this I shall shew you in the following particulars :

1. True grace makes all glorious within and

* Yet it must be granted, that many a fair flower may grow out of a stinking root, and many sweet dispositions and fair actions may be where there is only the corrupt root of nature.

without.* “The king’s daughter is all glorious within, her raiment is of wrought gold.” True grace makes the *understanding*, the *will*, and the *affections* glorious; it casts a general glory upon all the noble parts of the soul: and as it makes the inside glorious, so it makes the outside glorious, *Her clothing is of wrought gold.* It makes men look, walk, and act gloriously, so that vain men shall be forced to say, that these are they that have seen Jesus. As grace is a fire to burn up and consume the dross and filth of the soul, so it is an ornament to beautify and adorn it. True grace makes all new, the inside and the outside new. 2 Cor. v. 17. *If any man be in Christ he is a new creature;* but temporary grace doth not this. True grace changes the very nature of a man; moral virtue only restrains, or chains up the outward man, it does not change the whole man. A lion in his den, is a lion still; he is restrained, but not changed, for he retains his lion-like nature still; so temporary graces restrain many men from much wickedness, but do not change and turn their hearts from it. But true grace turns a lion into a lamb, as you may see in Paul; *Acts ix. a notorious strumpet into a blessed and glorious penitent,* as you may see in Mary Magdalene, &c. *Luke vii.*

2. The objects of true grace are supernatural. True grace is conversant about the choicest and highest objects; the most soul-ennobling, and soul-enriching objects, as God, Christ, precious promises that are of more worth than a world, and a kingdom that shakes not, a crown of glory that

* God brings not a pair of scales to weigh our graces, but a touchstone to try them. Purity, preciousness, and holiness, are stamped upon all saving graces. Acts xv. 9. 2 Pet. i. Jude 20.

wither not, and heavenly treasures that rust not.* The objects of temporary grace are low and poor, and always within the compass of reason's reach.

3. True grace enables a Christian (when he is like himself) to perform spiritual actions with real pleasure and delight. To souls truly gracious, Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden is light; his commandments are not grievous, but joyous. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," saith Paul. The blessed man is described as a lover of God's word—"He delights in the law of the Lord. It is joy to the just to do judgment." saith Solomon. To a gracious soul, "All the ways of the Lord are pleasantness, and his paths are peace." But to souls that have but temporary grace, but moral virtues, religious services are a toil, not a pleasure; a burden, and not a delight: "Wherefore have we fasted (say they) and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge," Is. lviii. 3, &c. "Ye have said (say those in Malachi) it is in vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts?" Mal. iii. 14. "When will the new moon be gone," (say those in Amos) that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit," Amos viii. 5.

4. True grace makes a man most careful, most fearful, and most studious about his own heart, informing, examining, and watching over that; but temporary grace, moral virtues, make men

* 2 Cor iv. 18. chap. xi. Heb. xi.

t Ps. li. 10. cxix. 36, 80. cxxxix. 23. and lxxxvi. 11
Matt. xxvii.

more mindful and careful of others, to instruct them, and counsel them, and stir them up, and watch over them, which plainly demonstrates, that their graces are not saving, and peculiar to saints, but that they are temporary, and no more than Judas, Demas, and the Pharisees had.

5. Grace will incline a man's heart to love, and cleave to the holiest ways and things of God, for their purity and sanctity, in the face of all dangers and hardships.* *Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it,* Ps. cxix. 140. Others love it, and like it, and follow it, for the credit, the honour, the advantage that they get by it; but I love it for the spiritual beauty and purity of it. So the Psalmist, "All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way. Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death," Ps. xliv. 17, 18, 19. But temporary grace will not bear up the soul against all oppositions and discouragements in the ways of God, as is clear by the apostacy in *John* vi. 66. and in and by the stony-ground hearers of the word falling away. *Matt. xiii. 20, 21.*

6. True grace will enable a man to step over the world's crown, and take up Christ's cross; to prefer the cross of Christ above the glory of this world. It enabled Abraham, and Moses, and Daniel, with those other worthies in *Heb. xi.* to do so.

Temporary grace cannot make the soul prefer Christ's cross above the world's crown; for when

* Grace is a panoply against all trouble, and a Paradise of all pleasures.

these two meet, a temporary Christian will step over Christ's cross to take up, and keep the world's crown. *Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world*, 2 Tim. iv. 10. So the young man in the gospel had many good things in him, he bid fair for heaven, and came near to it; but when Christ sets his cross before him, he steps over that to enjoy the world, Mat. xix. 20, 21, 22. When Christ bid him, " Go and sell all that he had, and give to the poor, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." If heaven is to be had upon no other terms, Christ may keep his heaven to himself, he will not have it.

7. Sanctifying and renewing grace puts the soul upon spiritual duties; from *spiritual* and *inward* motives, as from the sense of divine love, which constrains the soul to wait on God, and act for God, and the sense of the excellency and sweetness of communion with God, and the choice and precious discoveries that the soul formerly* had of the beauty and glory of God, whilst engaged in his service; the good looks, the gracious words, and the sweet embraces, that gracious souls have had from Christ in his service, provoke and move them to wait upon him in holy duties.† But restraining, temporary grace, puts men upon religious duties, *only from external motives*, as the eye of superiors, the rewards of the world, a good name among men, and a thousand such like considerations, as you may

* As what I have, if offered to thee, pleaseth not thee, O Lord, without myself, so the good things we have from thee, though they may refresh us, yet they satisfy us not without thyself.—*Bern.*

† It is an excellent speech of Bernard, " Good art thou, O Lord, to the soul that seeks thee; what art thou then to the soul that finds thee?"

see in Saul, Jehu, Judas, Demas, and the Scribes and Pharisees.

The abbot mentioned by Melancthon lived strictly, walked demurely, and looked humbly, so long as he was but a monk, but when by his seemingly extraordinary sanctity he got to be abbot, he grew intolerably proud and insolent; and being asked the reason of it, said, "That his former lowly look was but to see if he could but find the keys of the abbey." Such poor, low, vain motives, induce carnal men to all the religious service they perform.

8. Saving, renewing grace, will make a man follow the Lord fully in the desertion of all sin, and in the observation of all God's precepts. Joshua and Caleb followed the Lord fully, Zachariah and Elizabeth were righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless; the saints are thus described in the Revelations: *They follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth:* but mere temporary grace cannot enable a man to follow the Lord fully: all that it can enable a man to do, is to follow the Lord partially, unevenly, and haltingly, as you may see in Jehu, Herod, Judas, and the Scribes and Pharisees, who paid tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, but omitted the weightier matters of the law; namely, judgment, mercy, and faith.*

True grace implants in the heart the hatred of all sin, and the love of all truth; it works in a man the hatred of those sins that he cannot conquer, and to loath those sins that he would give all the world to overcome: so that a soul truly gracious can say,

* Numb. xiv. 24. *Hath fulfilled after me.* A metaphor taken from a ship under sail, that is strongly carried with the wind, as fearing neither rocks nor sands. Luke i. 5, 6. Rev. xiv. 4. Mat. xxiii. 23.

though there is no one sin mortified and subdued in me as it should be, and as I would, yet every sin is hated and loathed by me. Though I do not obey any one command as I should, and as I would, yet every word is sweet, every command of God is precious; I dearly prize, and greatly love those commands that I cannot obey; though there are many commands that I cannot in a strict sense fulfil. "I love thy commandments above gold, above fine gold. My soul hath kept thy testimonies, and I love them exceedingly."

9. True grace leads the soul to rest in Christ, as in his CHIEFEST GOOD; it causes it to centre in Christ, as in its highest and ultimate end. "Whither should we go, thou hast the words of eternal life. I found him whom my soul loveth, I held him and would not let him go." The wisdom a believer has from Christ, leads him to rest in the wisdom of Christ; and the love the soul has from Christ, leads it to rest in the love of Christ; and the righteousness the soul has from Christ, leads it to rest in the righteousness of Christ.* True grace is a beam of Christ, and where it is, it will naturally lead the soul to rest in Christ. The stream does not more naturally lead to the fountain, nor the effect to the cause, than true grace leads the soul to Christ. But mere restraining grace, leaves the soul to rest in things below Christ. Sometimes it leads it to rest in the praises of the creature; sometimes to rest in creature-rewards; *Verily they have their reward*, Mat. vi. 1, 2. said Christ; and so in an hundred other things.

10. True grace will enable a soul to sit down

* John vi. 68. Cant. v. 10. and iii. 4. Grace is that star that leads to Christ; it is that cloud and pillar of fire that leads the soul to the heavenly Canaan, where Christ sits chief. 1 Cor. i. 30. Phil. iii. 9.

satisfied and contented with the enjoyment of Christ. The enjoyment of Christ, without honour, without riches, without pleasures, and without the smiles of creatures, will content and satisfy the soul. *It is enough Joseph is alive.* So says a gracious soul, though honour is not, and riches are not, and health is not, and friends are not, &c. it is enough that Christ is, THAT HE REIGNS, CONQUERS, AND TRIUMPHS. Christ is the pot of manna, the cruse of oil, a bottomless ocean of all comfort, content, and satisfaction ; he that has him, wants nothing ; he that wants him, enjoys nothing ; *Having nothing* (saith Paul) *and yet possessing all things.* Oh ! but a man that has but restraining grace, cannot sit down satisfied and contented, under the want of outward comforts. Christ is good, saith such a soul, with honours, riches, pleasures, and outward comforts. I must have Christ and the world, or else like the young man in the gospel, (in spite of my soul) I shall forsake him to follow the world. Ah ! how many shining professors are there in the world, who cannot be satisfied and contented, for want of some supposed outward comfort, but are fretting, raging, and roaring, as if there were no God, no heaven, and no Christ to make up all such outward wants to them. But a soul truly gracious can say, " In having nothing I have all things, because I have Christ ; having therefore all things in him, I seek no other reward, for he is the universal reward. Nothing is sweet to me without the enjoyment of Christ in it ; neither honours, riches, nor the smiles of creatures are sweet to me, any farther than I see and taste Christ in them. The possession of all outward good cannot make a heaven of glory in my soul, if Christ, who is the summit of my glory, be absent ; as Absalom said, " What is all this to me, so long as I cannot see the king's

face?" So says a gracious soul, why do you tell me of outward comforts, when I cannot see his face whom my soul loveth? Why honour, and riches, and the favour of the creature, are not Christ; let me have him, and let the men of this world take the world and divide it amongst themselves, I prize my Christ above all, I would enjoy my Christ above all other things in the world, his presence will make up the absence of all other comforts; and his absence will embitter all my comforts; so that my comforts will neither taste nor look like comforts, when he that should comfort my soul stands afar off. Christ is all, and in all to souls truly gracious; we have all things in Christ, and *Christ is all things to a Christian*; if we are sick, he is a physician; if we thirst, he is a fountain; if we stand in need of help, he is mighty to save; if we fear death, he is life; if we are in darkness, he is light; if we are weak, he is strength; if we are in poverty, he is plenty; if we desire heaven, he is the way. The soul cannot say, this I would have, and that I would have; but saith Christ, **IT IS IN ME, it is in me EMINENTLY, PERFECTLY, ETERNALLY.** *None but Christ, none but Christ,* said Lambert, the martyr, lifting up his hands, with his fingers' ends flaming

CHAPTER V.

The fifth Device of Satan to keep souls in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition, is,

By suggesting to them, that the conflict that is in them, is not a conflict peculiar to saints, but may be found in hypocrites, and profane souls also; when the truth is, there is as much difference between the conflict in them, and that which is in wicked men, as there is between light and darkness, or heaven

and hell ; the truth of which I shall shew to you in the following particulars :

1. The whole frame of a believer's soul is against sin, his understanding, will, and affections, yea, all the powers and faculties of the soul, are in arms against sin. A covetous man may condemn covetousness, and yet the frame and bent of his heart may be to it ; a proud person may condemn pride, and yet the frame of his spirit may be to it ; and the drunkard may condemn drunkenness, and yet the frame of his spirit may be to it ; a man may condemn stealing and lying, and yet the frame of his heart may be to them. *Rom. ii. 21, 22, 23.* "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal ? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery ? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege ? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonourest God ?" But a saint's will is against it. *The evil that I would not, that I do ;* and his affections are against it. *What I hate, that do I.* *Rom. vii. 19.*

2. A saint fights against sin universally, *the least as well as the greatest* ; the most profitable and the most pleasing sin, as well as against those that are less so ; he will combat with all, though he do not conquer one as he would. He knows that every sin strikes at God's holiness, as well as his own happiness ; at God's glory, as well as his soul's comfort and peace.

He knows that *every sin is hateful to God*, and that all sinners are traitors to the crown and dignity of the Lord Jesus. He looks upon one sin, and sees that it threw down a Noah, the most righteous man in the world ; and he looks upon another, and sees that it cast down an Abraham, the greatest believer in the world ; and he looks upon another sin,

and sees that that threw down a David, the best king in the world ; and he looks upon another sin, and sees that it cast down a Paul, the greatest apostle in the world. He sees that one sin threw down a Sampson, the strongest man in the world ; another cast down a Solomon, the wisest man in the world ; and another a Moses, the meekest man in the world ; and another sin cast down a Job, the most patient man in the world ; and this raises a holy indignation *against all*, so that nothing can satisfy and content his soul, but the destruction of all those lusts and vermin that vex and rack his righteous soul ; it will not suffice a gracious soul to see justice done upon *one* sin, but he cries out for justice upon *all* ; he would not have some crucified, and others spared, but cries out, Lord, crucify them ALL, crucify them ALL ! Now the conflict that is in wicked men, is partial ; they frown upon one sin, and smile upon another ; they strike at some sins, and cherish others ; they thrust some out of doors, but keep others close in their bosoms as you may see in Jehu, Herod, Judas, Simon Magus, and Demas. Wicked men strike at gross sins such as are not only against the law of God, but against the laws of nature and nations, but make nothing of secret sins ; as vain thoughts, idle words, sinful motions, petty oaths, &c. They fight against those sins that fight against their honour, profits, pleasures, &c. but make truce with those that are as right hands, and right eyes to them. *John iii. 20.*

3. The conflict that is in a saint against sin, is maintained by several arguments ; by arguments drawn from the love and honour of God,* the

* Though to be kept from sin brings comfort to us, yet for us to oppose sin from spiritual and heavenly arguments, and God to pardon sin, that brings most glory to God.

sweetness of communion with God, and from the spiritual and heavenly blessings and privileges that are conferred upon them by God ; and of arguments drawn from the blood of Christ, the glory of Christ, the eye of Christ, the love and intercession of Christ : and of arguments drawn from the earnest of the Spirit, the seal and witness of the Spirit, the comforts of the Spirit. But the conflict that is in wicked men is from low, carnal, and legal arguments, drawn from the eye, ear, or hand of the creature ; or drawn from shame, hell, the curses of the law,* &c.

4. The conflict that is in the saints, is blessed, successful, and prevailing conflict. A saint by his conflict with sin, gains ground upon it. "They that are Christ's (*saith the Apostle*) have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."† Christ puts to his hand, and helps them to lead captivity captive, and sets their feet upon the necks of those lusts that have formerly trampled upon their souls and their comforts. As the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker, and the house of David stronger and stronger, so the Lord by the discoveries of his love, and the influences of his Spirit, causes grace, the nobler part of a saint, to grow stronger and stronger, like David ; and corruption, like the house of Saul, to grow weaker and weaker. But sin in a wicked man gets ground,‡ and grows stronger

* It was an excellent saying of Euesbius Emesenus : "Our fathers overcame the torrents of the flames, let us overcome the fiery darts of vices." Consider that the pleasure and sweetness that follows victory over sin, is a thousand times beyond that seeming sweetness that is in sin.

† These two, grace and sin, are like two buckets of a well, when one is up the other is down. The more grace thrives in the soul, the more sin dies in it.

‡ From naught they grow to be very naught, and from very naught to be stark naught. Lactant saith of Lucian,

and stronger ; notwithstanding all his conflicts, his heart is more encouraged, emboldened, and hardened in a way of sin, as you may see in the Israelites, Pharaoh, Jehu, and Judas, who doubtless had many strange conflicts, tumults and mutinies in their souls, when God spake such terrible things against them, and did such justice upon them.

But remember this by way of caution, though Christ hath given sin its death-wound, (by his power, Spirit, death and resurrection) yet it will die but a lingering death ; as a man that is mortally wounded, dies slowly, so does sin in the heart of a saint. The death of Christ on the cross was a lingering death, so is the death of sin in the soul ; it receives a blow to-day, and gets a wound to-morrow, and labours long under disability before its dissolution.

The best men's souls in this life hang between the flesh and the spirit,* as it were like Mahomet's coffin at Mecca, which, as some have pretended, hangs between two load-stones ; like Erasmus, as the Papists paint him between heaven and hell ; like the tribe of Manasseh, half on this side Jordan, in the land of the Amorites, and half on the other side, in the Holy Land : yet in the issue they shall overcome the flesh, and trample upon the necks of their spiritual enemies.

CHAPTER VI.

The sixth Device of Satan to keep souls in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition, is,

By suggesting to the soul that his estate is not good, because he cannot joy and rejoice in Christ,

“ He spared neither God nor man.” Mortification is a continued act, it is a daily dying to sin. “ I die daily.”

* The Romans lost many a battle, and yet in the end were conquerors in all their wars : it is just so with the saints

as he once could, because he hath lost that comfort and joy that was once in his spirit. Saith Satan, " You know the time was, when your heart was much carried out in joying and rejoicing in Christ : you do not forget the time when your heart was full of joy and comfort, but now, how are you fallen in your joys and consolations ? Therefore your estate is not good now, and you do but deceive yourself, to think that ever it was, for surely if it had, your joy and comfort would have continued." And here-upon the soul is apt to fall in with Satan and say, It is even so, I see all is wrong, and I have but deceived my own soul,—Now the Remedies against this Device are these :

Remedy I. Consider, that the loss of comfort is separable from grace ; the soul may be *full* of holy affections, when it is *empty* of divine consolations. There may be, and often is, much of true grace, where there is not a drop of comfort, nor a dram of joy.* Comfort is not of the *being*, but of the *well-being* of a Christian. God hath not so linked these two together, but that they may be put asunder.† That wisdom that is from above, will never instruct a man to reason thus : ' I have no comfort, *therefore* I have no grace ; I have lost that joy that I once had, *therefore* my condition is not good, nor was ever good.' But it will enable him to reason thus : ' Though my comfort is gone, yet the God of my comfort abides ; though my joy is lost, yet the seeds of grace remain.' The best men's joys

* Ps. lxiii. 1, 2, 8. Isa. l. 10. Mic. vii. 8, 9. Ps. xlvi. 5.

† Spiritual joy is a sun that is often clouded, though it be as precious a flower as almost Paradise affords, yet it is subject to fade and wither.

are like glass, bright and brittle, and ever in danger of breaking.

Rem. II. Solemnly consider, that the precious things which you still enjoy, are far better than the joys and comforts which you have lost. Your union and communion with Christ, your son-ship, your saint-ship, your heir-ship, which you still enjoy by Christ, are far better than the comforts you have lost by sin. Though your comforts be gone, yet you are a son, though a comfortless son; and an heir, though a comfortless heir; a saint, though a comfortless saint. *Jer. xxxi. 18, 19, 20.* Though the bag of silver (your comforts) be lost, yet the box of jewels, (your union and communion with Christ, son-ship, saint-ship, heir-ship) which you still enjoy, is far better than the bag of silver you have lost; yea, the least of those precious jewels is of more worth than all the comforts in the world. Well, let this be a cordial to comfort you, a star to lead you, and a staff to support you,—that your box of jewels is safe, though your bag of silver is lost.

Rem. III. Consider, that thy condition is no worse than the condition of those precious souls who were dear to Christ in life, and who are now at rest in his bosom. One day you hear them praising and rejoicing, the next mourning and weeping;* one day singing, *The Lord is our portion*; the next sighing and expostulating with themselves, “Why are ye cast down, O our souls? Why is our harp turned to mourning? And our organ into the voice of them that weep?”

Rem. IV. Consider,—perhaps your former joy and comfort might spring from the newness and

* Ps. li. 12. xxx. 6, 7. Job xix. 6, 8, 9. xxx. 31. Lam. i. 16. Matth. xxvii. 46. Ps. xlvi. 5. Lam. v. 15.

suddenness of the change of your condition :* for a man in one hour to have his night turned into day his darkness into light, his bitter into sweet, God's frowns into smiles, must greatly exalt and comfort him. It cannot but make his heart to rejoice within him, who in one hour shall see Satan accusing him, his own heart condemning him, the eternal God frowning upon him, the gates of heaven barred against him, all the creation standing armed as it were to execute vengeance on him, and the mouth of the infernal pit open to receive him. Now in this hour, for Christ to come to the amazed soul, and to say to it, "*I have trod the wine-press of my Father's wrath* for thee, *I have laid down my life a ransom* for thee, with my blood I have satisfied my Father's justice, and pacified his anger, and procured every token of his love" for thee ; "by my blood I have purchased the pardon of thy sins, thy freedom from hell, and procured thy right to heaven." Oh, how will this cause the soul to rejoice and leap for joy.

Rem. V. Consider, that God will restore and make up the comforts of his people. Though your candle is put out, yet God will light it again, and make it burn brighter than ever.† Though your

* A pardon given unexpectedly into the hand of a malefactor, when he is ready to be turned off, will cause much joy and rejoicing : the newness and suddenness of the change of his condition, will cause his heart to leap and rejoice ; yet in process of time, much of his joy will be abated, though his life is as dear to him still as ever it was.

† Hudson, the martyr, deserted at the stake, went under his chain, and having prayed earnestly, was comforted immediately, and suffered valiantly. So Mr. Glover, when he was within sight of the stake, cried out to his friend, "He is come ! he is come !" meaning the comforter that Christ promised to send. See Ps. cxxvi. 6. and xlvi. 7, 8.

sun for the present is clouded, yet he that rules upon the clouds, shall scatter those clouds, and cause the sun to shine and warm your heart, as in former days, as the Psalmist speaks, "Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shall quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side," Ps. lxxi. 20, 21. God takes away a little comfort, that he may make room in the soul for much consolation. This the prophet Isaiah sweetly shews: "I have seen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners," Isa. lvii. 18. Bear up sweetly, O precious soul! your storm shall end in a calm, and your dark night in a day of sunshine; your mourning shall be turned into rejoicing, and the waters of consolation shall be sweeter, and rise higher in your soul than ever; the mercy is surely thine, but the time of giving it is the Lord's: wait but a little, and you shall find the Lord comforting you on every side.

CHAPTER VII.

The seventh Device of Satan to keep souls in a sad, doubting, questioning condition, is,

By suggesting to the soul his frequent relapses into the same sin, which formerly he has pursued with particular sorrow, grief, shame, and tears, and prayed, complained, and resolved against. Saith Satan, "Your heart is not right with God, surely your state is not good, you do but flatter yourself to think that God will ever eternally own and embrace such an one as you are, who complainest

against sin, and yet faldest into it; who with tears and groans confess your sin, and yet every now and then art falling into the same sin again."

I confess it is a very sad circumstance for a soul, after he has obtained mercy and pity from the Lord, and God has spoken peace and pardon to him, and wiped his tears from his eyes, and set him upon his legs, to return to folly. *Ah! how do relapses lay men open to the greatest afflictions and worst temptations?* They make the wound bleed afresh; darken and cloud former assurances and evidences for heaven; put a sword into the hand of conscience to cut and wound the soul; raise such fears, terrors, horrors, and doubts within the soul, that it cannot be so frequent nor so fervent as formerly; nor so confident, familiar, and delightful with God in prayer as in time past; they give Satan an advantage to triumph against Christ; make the work of repentance more difficult; a man's life a burden; and render death very terrible indeed unto the soul. Now the Remedies against this Device are these:

Remedy I. Solemnly consider, that there are many scriptures that clearly evince a possibility of the saints falling into the same sins whereof they have formerly repented. "I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him." Hosea xiv. 4. So Jeremiah speaks, chap. iii. 12, 14. "Go and proclaim these words towards the North, and say, Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Turn, O backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion." And the Psalmist, "They

turned back* and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers, they were turned aside like a deceitful bow." And no wonder, for though their repentance is sincere and sound, yet their graces are but weak, and their mortification imperfect in this life; though by grace they are freed from the curse of the law, and the dominion and love of every sin, yet grace may not have freed them from the seed of *any one* sin; and therefore it is possible for a soul to fall again and again into the same sin. If the fire be not wholly put out, who would think it impossible that it shoud catch and burn again?

Rem. II. Seriously consider, that the most renowned (and now glorified) saints, have in the days of their pilgrimage relapsed into one and the same sin; and this came to pass, that they might see their own inability to stand against, to resist, or overcome any temptation or corruption. And that they might be taken off, from all false confidences, and rest wholly, and only, always upon God; and also for the praise and honour of the power, wisdom, skill, mercy, and goodness, of the Physician of our souls, who can heal, help, and cure, when the disease is most dangerous,† even when others are saying, *There is no help for him in his God*, and his own heart is failing, and his hopes are dying.

Rem. III. Consider, that there are voluntary and involuntary relapses. Involuntary relapses are, when the resolution and full bent of the heart is

* The sin of backsliding is a soul-wounding sin, "I will heal their backsliding." You read of no armour for the back, though you do for the breast. When a soldier bragged too much of a scar in his forehead, Augustus Caesar asked him, if he did not get it when he looked back as he fled.

† The Prodigal saw the compassion of his father the greater, in receiving him, after he had run away from him.

against sin, when the soul strives with all its might against it, by sighs and groans, prayers and tears, and yet out of weakness is obliged to fall back, because there is not spiritual strength enough to overcome. *There is a great difference between a sheep that by weakness falls into the mire, and a swine that delights to wallow in it.* Now though these involuntary relapses must humble us, yet they should never discourage us. Voluntary relapses are, when the soul longs and loves *to return to the flesh-pots of Egypt*: when it is both pleasure and pastime to a man to return to his old courses; *such wilful falls shew the man to be blind, hardened, and ripened for ruin.*

Rem. IV. Consider, that there is no such power, or infinite virtue in the greatest horror, or sorrow the soul can be under for sin, nor in the sweetest, or choicest discoveries of God's grace,* and love to the soul; as for ever to fence and secure the soul from falling in the same sin. Those discoveries that God makes of his love, beauty, and glory, to the soul, do not always abide in their freshness and power, but by degrees they fade and wear off, and the soul may return again to folly, as we see in Peter, who after he had had a glorious testimony from Christ's own mouth of his blessedness and happiness, labours to prevent him from going up to Jerusalem to suffer, from mere slavish fears, that he and his fellows could not be secure, if his Master should be brought to suffer. And again after this, Christ had him up into the mount, and there shewed him his beauty and glory, to

* Christ upbraided his disciples for their unbelief and hardness of heart, who had seen his glory, as the glory of the only begotten son of God, full of grace and truth. John i. 4. Matt. xvi. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24.

strengthen him against the hour of temptation that was coming upon him ; and yet soon after he had had the honour and happiness of seeing the glory of the Lord, (which most of his disciples had not) he basely and most shamefully denies the Lord of glory, thinking by that means to provide for his own safety. Matt. xxvi. 69. 75. And again, after Christ had broken his heart with a look of love for his most unlovely dealings, and bade them that were at first acquainted with his resurrection, to *go and tell Peter that he was risen* : I say, after all this slavish fears prevail upon him. See Gal. ii. 11, 12, 13.

God hath made even his dearest ones severely smart for their falls, as may be seen by his dealings with Samson, Jehoshaphat, and Peter. Ah, *Lord ! what a hard heart hath that man, who can see thee stripping and whipping thy dearest ones for their sins, and yet make nothing of returning to folly.*

CHAPTER VIII.

The eighth Device of Satan to keep souls in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition, is,

By persuading them that their estate is not good, their hearts are not upright, their graces are not sound, because they are so followed, vexed, and tormented with temptations. It is his method, first to weary and vex the soul with temptations, and then he tempts the soul to think that it is not beloved, because it is so tempted.* And by this stratagem he keeps many precious souls in a sad, doubting, and mourning temper many years, as

* He may so tempt as to make a saint weary of his life, Job x. 1. " My soul is weary of my life."

many of the precious sons of Sion have found by woful experience.—Now the Remedies against this Device are these :

Remedy I. Solemnly consider, that those that have been best and most beloved, have generally been most tempted.* Though Satan can never rob a Christian of his crown, yet such is his malice, that he will therefore tempt, that he may spoil them of their comforts: such is his enmity to the father, that the nearer and dearer any child is to him, the more will Satan trouble him, and vex him with temptations. Christ himself was most near and most dear, most innocent and most excellent, and yet none so much tempted as Christ. David was dearly beloved, and yet by Satan tempted to number the people. Job was highly prized by God himself, and yet much tempted, witness those mournful expressions that fell from his mouth, when he was wet to the skin. Peter was much prized by Christ, witness that choice testimony that Christ gave of his faith and happiness, and his shewing him his glory in the mount, and the eye of pity that he cast upon him after his fearful fall, and yet tempted by Satan. “ And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail thee not,” &c. Luke xxii. 31, 32.

Paul had the honour of being exalted as high as heaven, and of seeing that glory that could not be expressed; and yet he no sooner stepped out of heaven, but he was buffeted by Satan, *lest he should be exalted above measure*, 2 Cor. xii. 2. 7.

* Pirates do not use to set upon poor empty vessels; and beggars need not fear the thief. Those that have most of God, and are most rich in grace, shall be most set upon by Satan.

If these who were so really, and so eminently beloved of God, if those who have lived in heaven and set their feet upon the stars, have been tempted let no saints judge themselves not beloved, because they are tempted. It is as natural for saints to be tempted that are dearly beloved, as it is for the sun to shine, or a bird to sing. The eagle complains not of her wings, nor the peacock of his train, nor the nightingale of her voice, because these are natural to them; no more should saints of their temptations, because they are natural to them.* Eph. vi. 12. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Rem. II. Consider, that all the temptations that befall the saints, shall be sanctified to them by a hand of love. Ah! the choice experiences that the saints attain to of the wisdom of God directing, (so to handle their spiritual weapons, their graces, as not only to resist, but to overcome) of the mercy and goodness of the Lord pardoning and succouring of them. And therefore said Paul, I received the messenger of Satan for to buffet me, "lest I should be exalted above measure," 2 Cor. xii. 7. He says this twice in that verse; he begins with it, and ends with it. If he had not been buffeted, who knows how his heart would have swelled? He might have been carried higher in conceit, than before he was in his ecstacy. Temptation is God's school, wherein he gives his people the

* Temptations may be more properly called accidental, than natural. "They proceed from the implacable enmity of Satan without, working upon our corrupt part within.—The reason why the author styles them *natural*, is, because they are common to ALL saints; none are exempt from them." D. P

sweetest and clearest discoveries of his love; a school wherein God teaches his people to be more frequent and fervent in duty.* When Paul was buffeted, then he prayed thrice, i. e. frequently and fervently. A school wherein God teaches his people to be more tender, meek, and compassionate to other poor tempted souls than ever; to see a greater evil in sin, a greater emptiness in the creature, and a greater need of Christ and free grace than ever; and to know that *all temptations are but his goldsmiths, by which he will try and refine, and make them more bright.* The issue of all temptations shall be to the good of the saints, as you may see by the temptations that Adam and Eve, Christ and David, Job, Peter and Paul met with. Those hands of power and love, that bring light out of darkness, good out of evil, sweet out of bitter, life out of death, comfort out of sorrow, will bring great good to his people, out of all the temptations that come upon them.

Rem. III. Wisely consider, that no temptations injure the saints, so long as they are resisted by them, and prove the greatest afflictions that can befall them. It is not Satan's *tempting*, but your *assenting*; not his *enticing*, but your *yielding*, that makes temptations hurtful to your souls. If the soul, when it is tempted, resist the temptation, and say with Christ, "Get thee behind me Satan;" and with that young convert, "I am not the man that I was;" or as Luther counsels all men to answer all temptations with these words, "I am a Christian." If a man's temptation be his greatest affliction, then is the temptation no sin upon his soul, though it be a trouble upon his mind. When

* Luther said "There were three things that made a preacher," Meditation, Prayer, and Temptation.

a soul can look the Lord in the face, and say, Ah, Lord ! I have many outward troubles upon me, I have lost many great and desirable mercies, and yet thou that knowest the heart, knowest that all my crosses and losses do not make such wounds in my soul, nor fetch so many sighs from my heart, and tears from my eyes, as those temptations do, which Satan follows my soul with. When it is thus with the soul, then temptations are only the soul's trouble, they are not its sin."

" Satan is a malicious enemy; as his names are, so is he ; his names are all names of enmity ; *the accuser, the tempter, the destroyer, the devourer, the envious* ; and he shews this malice and envy of his, sometimes by tempting men to such sins as are quite contrary to their natural temper, as he did Vespasian and Julian, men of sweet and excellent natures to be most bloody murderers. And sometimes by tempting men to such sins as shall bring them neither honour nor profit. " Fall down and worship me," to blasphemy and atheism, uncleanness, &c. the thoughts and first motions whereof, cause the heart and flesh to tremble. Now if the soul resists, complains of, and groans and mourns under these, and looks up to the Lord Jesus to be delivered, then shall they not be put down to the soul's account, but to Satan's, who shall be so much the more tormented, by how much the more the saints have been by him maliciously tempted.

Make present and peremptory resistance against Satan's temptations ; bid defiance to the temptation at first sight It is safe to resist, it is dangerous to dispute. Eve lost herself, and her posterity, by falling into dispute, when she should have resisted and stood upon terms of defiance with Satan. *He that would stand in the hour of temptation,* must plead as Christ did, " IT IS WRITTEN,"

Satan is bold and impudent, and if you are not peremptory in your resistance, he will give you fresh onsets. It is your greatest honour and your highest wisdom, peremptorily to withstand the beginnings of a temptation, for an after-remedy comes often too late.

Mistress Catharine Bretterge, once after a great conflict with Satan, said, "Reason not with me, I am but a weak woman, if thou hast any thing to say, say it to my Christ, he is my advocate, my strength, and my Redeemer, and he shall plead for me!"

Men must not seek to resist Satan's craft by their own wit, **BUT BY OPEN DEFIANCE.** He shoots with Satan in his own bow, who thinks by disputing and reasoning to put him off. As soon as a temptation shews its face, say to it, as Ephraim to his idols, "Get you hence, what have I any more to do with you?" Hos. xiv. Oh! say to it, as David said to the sons of Zeruiah, *What have I to do with you?* 2 Sam. xvi. 10. You will be too hard for me. He that shall thus resist temptations, shall never be overcome by them.

Make strong and constant resistance against Satan's temptations, *by arguments drawn from the honour and love of God*, your union and communion with God; and from the kindness, blood, and death of Christ, the intercession and glory of Christ; and from the voice, the counsel, the comforts, the presence, the seal, the whisperings, the commands, the assistance, and the witness of the Spirit; and from the glory of heaven, the excellency of grace, the beauty of holiness, the worth of the soul, and the vileness, bitterness, and evil of sin, *the least sin being a greater evil, than the greatest temptation in the world.*

And look that you make *constant resistance*, as

well as *strong resistance*; be constant in arms. Satan will come on with new temptations, when old ones are too weak; in a calm, prepare for a storm. The tempter is restless, impudent, and subtle,* he will suit his temptations to your constitutions and inclinations. Satan loves to sail with the wind; if your knowledge be weak, he will tempt you to error; if tender, to scrupulosity, and too much preciseness, as to do nothing but hear, pray, read, &c. If your consciences be wide and large, he will tempt you to carnal security; if you are bold spirited, he will tempt you to presumption; if timorous, to desperation; if flexible, to inconstancy, if proud and stiff, to gross folly: therefore still look for fresh assaults, make one victory a step to another. When you have overcome a temptation, take heed of unbending your bow, but look well to it, that your bow be always bent, and that it remain in strength. When you have overcome one temptation, you must be ready to enter the list with another. As distrust (in some sense) is the mother of safety, so security is the gate of danger. A man had need to fear that most of all, which he fears not at all. If Satan be always roaring, we should be always watching and resisting him. And certainly, he that makes strong and constant resistance against Satan's temptations, shall in the end get above them, and for the present is secure enough from being ruined by them.

For a close of this head, remember, that it is *dangerous to yield to the least sin, to be rid of the greatest temptation.* To take this course,

* Luke iv. 13. "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season." Christ had no rest until he was exactly tried with all kinds of temptations.

as if a man should think to wash himself clean in ink, or as if he should exchange a light cross made of paper, for an iron cross, which is heavy, toilsome, and bloody. The least sin set home upon the conscience, will more wound, grieve, and oppress the soul, than all the temptations in the world can; therefore never yield to the least sin, to be rid of the greatest temptation. He that will yield to sin, to be rid of temptation, will be so much the more tempted, and the less able to withstand temptations.

PRECIOUS REMEDIES

AGAINST

SATAN'S DEVICES.

BEING A COMPANION FOR CHRISTIANS

OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

PART IV.

CHAPTER I.

The several Ways and Devices of Satan to destroy and ensnare all sorts and ranks of men in the world.

I SHALL begin with the honourable and great, and shew you the Devices that Satan has to destroy them. I will only instance those that are most considerable.

The first Device to destroy the great and honourable of the earth, is,

By inducing them to make it their business to seek how to exalt and raise themselves, to enrich and secure themselves, &c. as you may see in Pharaoh, Ahab, Rehoboam, Jeroboam, Absalom, Joab, Haman, &c. But were the scriptures silent, our own experience abundantly shews this way and method of Satan to destroy the great and honourable, and bury their names in the dust, and their souls in hell, by employing them wholly, only, and in all things, to mind themselves; and by keeping their minds perpetually in the pursuit of something to please and gratify themselves. *All* (saith the Apostle) *mind themselves*: see Phil. ii. 21. Al-

comparatively, for there are but few who let fall their private interests, and self-respect, for the glory of God, and the public good.—Now the Remedies against this Device are these :

Remedy I. Solemnly consider, that self-seeking is a sin that will lead men into many sins, and not only such as are against the law of God, and the rules of the gospel, but which are also against the very laws of nature, so much darkened by the fall of man.* It led the Pharisees to oppose Christ in his doctrine ; Judas to betray his Master for reward ; and Pilate to condemn the blessed Jesus, though he found him innocent, to keep favour with his wicked adversaries. It put Gehazi upon lying, and Balaam upon cursing, and Saul and Absalom upon plotting David's ruin. It led Pharaoh to pursue Israel, and set Haman upon contriving ways to destroy those Jews that God purposed to save by his own mighty arm. It induces men to use wicked balances, and the bag of deceitful weights ; and leads them into ways of oppression and cruelty, such as “ selling the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes,” &c. Amos ii. 6. I know not any sin in the world, but what this sin of self-seeking will set men upon, though it be to their eternal loss.

Rem. II. Seriously consider, that self-seeking exceedingly abases a man ; it strips him of all his royalty and glory : of a lord it makes him become a servant to the creature, and often to the worst of creatures ; yea, a slave to slaves, as you may see in Judas, Demas, Balaam, and the Scribes and Pharisees. Self-seekers bow down to creatures, as Gideon's many thousands bowed down to the waters : self-seeking will lead a man to say any thing, to do any thing, and be any thing, to

* Self-love is the root of the hatred of others, 2 Tim. iii. 2. First, lovers of themselves, and then fierce, &c.

please the lusts of others, and to take advantages upon them. Self-seeking transforms a man into all shapes and forms ; now it makes a man appear as an angel of light, anon as an angel of darkness ; now self-seekers are seemingly for God, anon they are openly against him : now you shall have them crying, *Hosannah in the highest*, and presently, *Crucify him, crucify him* ; now you shall have them build with the saints, and when opportunity serves best, plotting their overthrow, as those self-seekers did in Ezra and Nehemiah's time. Self-seekers are the meanest of all persons ; there is no service so base, so poor, so low, but they will stoop to it. They can look neither above, nor beyond their own lusts, and the enjoyment of the creature ; these are the first and last objects of their attentions. *Rom. i. 25.*

It is said of Tiberius, "That while Augustus ruled, he was no way tainted in his reputation ; and that while Drusus and Germanicus were alive, he feigned those virtues which he had not, to maintain a good opinion of himself in the hearts of the people ; but after he had got beyond the reach of control, there was no fact in which he was not faulty, no crime to which he was not accessory." My prayer shall be, that the spirit of Tiberius may not be found in any of our rulers, lest it prove their ruin, as it did his ; and that wherever it is, it may be detected, loathed, and ejected, that so neither the state nor souls may be ruined by it.

Rem. III. Solemnly dwell upon those dreadful curses and woes that are denounced from heaven against self-seekers. "Wo ! unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth." *Isa. v. 8.* So *Habakkuk, ii. 6.* "Wo ! to him that increaseth that which is not his, and to him that ladeth himself with thick

clay.* Wo! to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil.—For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. Wo! to him that buildeth a town with blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity.” *Hab.* ii. 9—12. The materials of the house built up by oppression, shall come as joint witnesses against the builder. The stones of the wall shall cry, “Lord, we were built up by blood and violence;” and the beam shall answer, “True, Lord, even so it is;” the stones shall cry, “Vengeance, Lord, upon these self-seekers,” and the beam shall answer, “Wo! to him, because he built his house with blood.” “Wo unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed. To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right of the poor of my people—Wo! unto them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel come—That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph. Wo! to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds: when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand.”†

By these scriptures you see how self-seekers labour, but their gain proves their loss; their pleasure

* Crassus, a very rich Roman, and a very great self-seeker, for greedy desire of gold waged war against the Parthians, by whom he and 30,000 Romans were slain; and because the barbarians conjectured that he made this assault upon them for their gold, therefore they melted gold, and poured it into his dead body, saying, “Satisfy thyself with gold.”

† Isa. x. 1, 2. Amos vi. 1. Mic. ii. 1, 2.

their pain ; their comforts, their torment ; their glory, their shame ; their exaltation, their desolation. Loss, disgrace, trouble and shame, vexation and confusion, will be the certain portion of self-seekers.

When the Tartarians had taken in battle the Duke of Muscovy, they made a cup of his skull, with this inscription, ALL COVET, ALL LOSE.

Rem. IV. Solemnly consider, that self-seekers are self-losers, and self-destroyers Absalom and Judas seek themselves, and hang themselves. Saul seeks himself and kills himself. Ahab seeks himself, and loses himself, his crown, and kingdom. Pharaoh seeks himself, and himself and his mighty army are overthrown in the Red-sea. Cain sought himself, and slew two at once, his brother and his own soul. Gehazi sought change of raiment, but God changed his raiment into a leperous skin. Haman sought himself, and lost himself. The princes and the presidents sought themselves, (in the ruin of Daniel) but ruined themselves, their wives and children. That which self-seekers think should be a staff to support them, becomes (by the hand of justice) an iron rod to break them ;* that which they would have as a spring to refresh them, proves a gulf to swallow them up. The crosses of self-seekers will always exceed their mercies ; their pain, their pleasure ; their torments, their comforts ; every self-seeker is a self-tormentor, a self-destroyer ; he carries a hell, and an executioner in his own bosom, &c.

* Adam seeks himself, and loses himself, Paradise, and that blessed image that God had stamped upon him. Lot seeks himself, Gen. xiii. 10, 11. and loses himself and his goods. Peter seeks to save himself, and miserably loses himself. Hezekiah, in the business of the ambassadors, seeks himself, and had lost himself and his life too, had not God saved him by a miracle.

Rem. V. Dwell much upon the famous examples of those worthy saints that have denied themselves, and preferred the public good before their own particular advantage ; as Moses. “ And the Lord said unto Moses, let me alone that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven, and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they.” Oh! but this offer would not take with Moses, he being a man of a brave public spirit, his desires and prayers were fervent, that the people might be spared and pardoned ; saith he, “ Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt even until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word.” Ah! should God make such an offer to many who call themselves as wise as Moses, and are called so by others, I am afraid they would prefer their own advantage above the public good ; they would not care what become of the people, so they and theirs might be made great and splendid in the world ; and a Babel might be built for them, though it were upon the ashes and ruin of the people. Baser spirits than these are not in hell, no, not in hell ; and I am sure there are none such in heaven. Such men’s hearts and principles must be changed, or they are undone for ever. Nehemiah was a choice soul, a man of a brave public spirit, who spent his time, strength and his estate, for the good and ease of his people. “ Moreover,” saith he, “ from the time I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year, even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor. Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall, and all my servants were gathered hither unto the work. Moreover,

there was at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, besides those that came unto us from among the heathens that are about us. Now that which was prepared for me daily, was one ox, and six choice sheep, also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine: yet for all this required I not the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon the people." And Daniel also was a man of a brave public spirit: "Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom, but they could find no occasion or fault, forasmuch as he was faithful; neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, we shall not fin'd any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him, concerning the law of his God."

Christ had a public spirit, he laid out himself, and laid down himself for a public good. Oh! never leave looking and meditating upon these precious and sweet examples, till your souls are quickened and raised up, to act for general good, more than for your own particular advantage. Many heathens have been excellent at this.

My prayer is, and shall be, that all our rulers may be so inspired of God, that they may be willing to be any thing or nothing, to deny, and trample sinful self under foot, for the honour of God, and the public good: that neither saints nor heathens may be witnesses against them in that day wherein the arts and practices of all the rulers of the world shall be laid open, before Him who shall judge the world in righteousness and truth.

Rem. VI. Seriously consider, that self is a great hinderance to divine things, therefore the prophets and apostles were usually carried out of themselves when they had the clearest and most glorious

visions. Self-seeking so blinds the soul, that it can neither see beauty in Christ, nor excellency in holiness; it so distemps the palate, that a man cannot taste sweetness in the word and ways of God, nor in the society of his people; it shuts the hand against all the soul-enriching gifts of Christ; it hardens the heart against all his knocks and entreaties; it makes the soul as an empty vine, and as a barren wilderness. "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit to himself," *Hos. x. 1.* There is nothing that shews a man to be more empty and void of God, Christ, and grace, than self-seeking.* The Pharisees were great self-seekers, and great undervaluers of Christ, his word, and Spirit.

There is not a greater hinderance to all the duties of piety than self-seeking. Oh! this is it that keeps many a soul from looking after God, and the precious things of eternity; they cannot wait upon, nor act for God, nor abide in those ways wherein they might meet with him, by reason of self. Self-seeking is that which puts many a man upon neglecting the things of his peace. Self-seekers will neither go into heaven themselves, nor suffer others to enter, who are ready to take the kingdom by violence, as we may see in the Scribes and Pharisees. Oh! but a gracious spirit is led quite in different ways: as you may see in that sweet scripture, *Cant. vii. 13.* "At our gates are all manner of pleasant fruit, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O beloved!" All the church hath, and is, is only for him; let others bear fruit to themselves, and lay up for themselves, gracious spirits will hide

* Self-seekers, with Esau, prefer a mess of pottage above their birth-right; and with the men of Shechem, esteem the bramble above the vine, the olive, and the fig-tree, yea, empty things above a full Christ, and base things above a glorious Christ

and lay up for Christ. All the divine endeavours and productions of saints, fall into God's bosom, and empty themselves into his lap. As Christ lays up his merits, his graces, his comforts, and his crown, for them; so they lay up all their fruits, their loves, their graces, their experiences, and their services, only for him who is the soul of their comforts, and the crown and summit of all their royalty and glory. The saints' motto is, "For thee, O Lord, for thee!" Or, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us!"

CHAPTER II.

The second Device of Satan to ensnare and destroy the great and honourable of the earth, is,

By engaging them against the people of the most High, who are his jewels, his pleasant portion, the delight of his eye, and the joy of his heart. Thus he drew Pharaoh to engage against the children of Israel, and that was his overthrow. He engaged Haman against the Jews, and so brought him to hang upon the gallows he had made for Mordecai. So he engaged those princes and presidents against Daniel, which was the utter ruin of them and their relations. So in *Rev. xx. 7, 8, 9.* "And when the thousand years had expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. And he shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; whose number is as the sand of the sea. And they went up upon the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."—Now the Remedies against this Device are these:

Remedy I. Consider, that none have engaged

against the saints, but have been ruined by the God of saints. Divine justice hath been too many for all that have opposed and engaged against the saints, as is evident in Saul, Pharaoh, Haman, &c. He “ reproved kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.” Ps. cv. 15. When men of Balaam’s spirit and principles have engaged against the saints, the angel of the Lord hath met them in the way of their destruction. What a harvest hath hell had in our days, of those who have engaged against the Lamb, and those that are called chosen and faithful? How hath Divine Justice poured out their blood, as water upon the ground? How hath he laid their honour and glory in the dust, who in the pride and madness of their hearts have said even as Pharaoh: “ We will pursue, we will overtake, we will divide the spoil, our lusts shall be satisfied upon them. We will draw our sword, our hand shall destroy them. In the things wherein they have spoken and done proudly, justice hath been above them.” History abounds in nothing more than in instances of this kind.*

* Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, who could not, on the day bishops Latimer and Ridley were burnt at Oxford, sit down to dinner till he heard fire was set to them. Sit down to dinner he did, but the hand of vengeance was soon visibly laid on him, for he was presently taken from the table to his bed, where languishing fifteen days a most dreadful spectacle, he died! And that matchless tyrant of cruelty, Bonner, bishop of London, who had made prisoners of, and caused so many to be put to death, for loving the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, was himself at last made prisoner in the Marshalsea, where he died in great poverty and misery; and, as I have been told, his body was buried under the prison wall, none lamenting him. The judgment threatened Jehoiakim, king of Judah, was fulfilled in him: there was none to lament him, to say, Ah! brother, or, ah! sister, but he was buried with the burial of an ass. Jer. xii. 19, 20. D.

Rem. II. Dwell some time every morning upon the following scriptures, wherein God hath engaged himself to stand by his people, and make them victorious over the greatest and wisest of their enemies. "Associate yourselves (saith the Lord by the prophet), O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces, and give ear, all ye far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought. Speak the word, and it shall not stand, for God is with us. *Isa.* viii. 9, 10. Fear not thou worm Jacob, &c. *Isa.* xli. 14—16. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. *Isa.* liv. 17. Now also many nations are gathered together against thee, that say, let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel, for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. *Mic.* iv. 11—13. Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem." *Zech.* xii. 2, 3.

Rem. III. Solemnly consider, that you cannot engage against the saints, but you must engage against God, by reason of that near and blessed union that is between God and them. You cannot fight against the saints, but you will be found at the close of the account to have fought against God himself: and what greater madness, than for weakness itself to fight against omnipotent strength? The near union that is between the Lord and believers, is set forth by the union that subsists between husband and wife. ("They two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.) We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," saith

the apostle. It is set forth by the union that is between the head and the members, which make up one body ; and by the union there is between the graft and the stock, which are made one by incision. The soul's happiness consists not in any thing, but in its union with God ; and its misery lies not so much in any thing, as in its disunion from God. The union between the Lord and his people is so near, that you cannot strike a believer, but the Lord is sensible of it, and takes it as done to himself. " Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?" *Acts ix.* 4. " In all their afflictions he was afflicted, &c. *Isa. lxiii.* 9. Ah, souls ! who ever engaged against God, and prospered ? Who ever took up the sword against him, but perished by it ? God can speak or nod you to hell in a moment ; it will be your greatest wisdom to lay down your weapons at his feet, and to " kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way." *Ps. ii.* 12.

Rem. IV. Again consider, that you are much indebted to the saints (as instruments) for the mercies you now enjoy, and for preventing many judgments that otherwise might have been your ruin before now. Were it not for the sake of the saints, God would quickly make the heavens as brass, and the earth as iron ; he would quickly strip thee of thy robes of glory, and set thee upon the dunghill with Job. They are the pillars that bear up the world, and keep it from falling about thy ears, and prevent the iron rod from breaking thy bones. " Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them." *Ps. cvi.* 23.

Had not the saints many a time cast themselves into the breach between God and you, you had been cut off from the land of the living, and

received your portion with those whose names are perishing in the dust. Many nations, cities, and families, are surrounded with blessings for the Josephs' sakes that live therein ; and are preserved from calamities for the Moses', the Daniels, the Noahs, and the Jobs' sakes, who dwell among them. That is a sweet word, *Prov.* x. 25. " As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more ; but the righteous is an everlasting foundation ;" or, " is the foundation of the world." The righteous are the foundation of the world, which, but for their sakes, would soon totter and fall to ruin. So the Psalmist, *Ps. lxxv. 3.* " The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved, I bear up the pillars of it. Selah."

I shall close this last Remedy with those sweet words of the Psalmist : " In Judah is God known, his name is great in Israel : in Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Sion. There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah." *Ps. lxxvi. 1—3.*

CHAPTER III.

*The third Device of Satan to ensnare and destroy
the learned and the wise, is,*

By setting them to pride themselves upon their learning and abilities ;* sometimes by inducing them to rest upon them ; sometimes by causing them to make light of those who may be deficient in these things, though they excel in grace and holiness : sometimes by prevailing with them to engage their learning and abilities against the honour of Christ, the joy of the Spirit, the advancement of the gospel,

* John v. 44. 1 Kings xii. 22—25. 1 Cor. i. 18—29. The truth of this you may see in the learned Scribes and Pharisees.

and the liberty of the saints.—Now the Remedies against this Device are these :

Remedy I. Seriously consider, that you have nothing but what you have received ; Christ is the fountain of common gifts, as well as of saving grace. “What hast thou,” saith the apostle, “that thou hast not received ? And if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it ?” *1 Cor. iv. 7.* There are those who would draw out their own happiness, like the spider, by a thread of their own spinning. Of all the learning and abilities that you possess, you may say as the young man did of his axe, “Alas, Master ! for it was borrowed.” Alas, Lord ! all I have is but borrowed from that fountain which fills all the vessels in heaven* and on earth, and overflows : my gifts are not so much mine as thine, “Of thine own have we given thee,” said the princely prophet, *1 Chron. xxix. 14.*

Rem. II. Solemnly consider, that men by leaning upon, and trusting to their own abilities, have proved their own utter ruin ; as you may see in Ahitophel, and those presidents and princes who engaged against Daniel, and in the Scribes and Pharisees. God loves to confute the boasting of men : he that stands upon his learning and abilities, stands upon a quicksand that will certainly fail him. There is nothing in the world that so provokes God to withdraw from the soul, as this : and how can a soul stand, when his strength is departed from him ? Every thing that a man leans upon except God, will be a dart that will certainly pierce his heart through and through. Ah ! how many in these days have lost their estates, their friends, their lives, their souls, by leaning

* Whatsoever thou art, thou owest to him that made thee ; and whatsoever thou hast, thou owest to him that redeemed thee.—*Bern.*

upon learning and abilities? The saints are described by their leaning upon their beloved, the Lord Jesus, *Cant.* viii. 5. He that leans only upon the bosom of Christ, lives the highest, safest, and sweetest life. Misery and great danger always lie at that man's door, who leans upon any thing below the precious bosom of Christ; and his greatest danger is, that he thinks himself secure. It is the greatest wisdom in the world to take the wise man's counsel: "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding." *Prov.* iii. 5.

Rem. III. Consider, that you do not excel others more in abilities than they do you in grace and holiness. There may be, and often are, great parts and shining abilities, where there is but little or no grace; and there may be, and often is, a great deal of grace, where there are but weak abilities. You may be higher than others in gifts of knowledge, utterance, learning, &c. yet those very souls may be higher than you in their communion with God, heavenly delights, humble dependence, holy affections, and in holy and unblameable walking before God. Is it not folly and madness in a man to despise another, because he is not so rich as he is in lead or iron, when at the same time he is a thousand times richer in silver, gold, jewels, and pearls? And is it not madness and folly with a witness, in those who have greater parts, and more extensive abilities than others, to despise them upon that account, when those very persons whom they despise, have a thousand times more grace than they? Yet how much this evil spirit prevails in the world?

It was the sad complaint of Augustine in his time, "the unlearned" (saith he) rise up, and take heaven by violence, and we with all our learning are thrust down to hell." St. Paul, the great apostle of th-

Gentiles, wonderfully surpassed in all learning and abilities, the doctors and rabbies of our times, and yet how humbly, how tenderly, he carried himself towards the meanest and the weakest? “ To the weak I became as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not? Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.” But how little of this amiable spirit is found in the doctors of our age, who look sourly, and speak bitterly against those who do not see as they see, or cannot speak as they speak. Sirs, the Spirit of the Lord (even in despised saints) will be too hard for you; and his appearance in them, in these latter days, will be so full of spiritual beauty, and glory, as to darken what you are too ready to call your glory. The Spirit of the Lord will not suffer his choicest jewel, grace, always to be buried under the straw and stubble of learning. *Isa. lx. 12—17.*

Rem. IV. Consider, that there is no way more likely for men to have their gifts and parts blasted and withered, than to pride themselves in them, and rest upon them, to make light of, and slight those who want them, and engage themselves against those persons, ways, and things that Jesus Christ hath set his heart upon. Ah! how hath God blasted and withered the gifts and abilities of many among us, who once were famous shining lights? How is their glory clouded? “ the sword (of the Lord) shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye? His arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened?” *Zech. xi. 17.* This is matter of humiliation and lamentation: many precious discerning saints see this, and

in secret mourn for it; and oh ! that they themselves were deeply sensible of God's absence from them, that they might repent and be humbled, and carry it better towards God's jewels, and lean only upon the Lord, and not upon their parts and understanding, that the Lord may delight to visit them with his grace, so that their faces may shine more gloriously than ever, and that they may be more serviceable to the honour of Christ, and the faith of the saints, than ever they were.

CHAPTER IV.

Satan hath his Devices to hurt the saints, and one great Device that he hath to hurt them, is,

By tempting them to be strange, and then to divide, and then to be bitter and jealous ; and then “to bite and devour one another,” Gal. v. 15. Our own woeful experience is too great a proof of this. The Israelites in Egypt did not more vex one another, than Christians in our days have done, which has occasioned a sad consumption to fall upon some.—Now the Remedies against this Device are these :

Remedy I. Against this Device of Satan, dwell more upon each others graces, than upon one another's weaknesses and infirmities.* It is sad to consider, that saints should have many eyes to look upon their brethren's infirmities, and not one eye to see their graces ; that they should use spectacles to behold one another's weaknesses, rather than looking-glasses to behold one another's virtues.

* Flavius Vespasian, the emperor, was more ready to conceal the vices of his friends, than their virtues. Can you think seriously of this, Christians, (that a Heathen should excel you) and not blush ?

Erasmus tells of one who collected all the faulty and defective verses in Homer's works, but passed over all that were excellent. Oh ! that this were not the practice of many who shall at last meet in heaven ; that they were not industrious to collect all the weaknesses of others, and to pass over their excellencies. The Corinthians eyed more the incestuous person's sin, than his sorrow, which had like to have drowned him in affliction, 2 Cor. ii. 7, 8.

Tell me saints, is it not a more delightful thing to look upon that which is excellent in others, than upon their infirmities ? Tell me, what pleasure, delight, or comfort, is there in looking upon the enemies, the diseases, the nakedness of our friends ? Now, sin you know is an enemy, disease, and nakedness of the soul ; and what a heart hath that man that loves to look upon these ? Grace is the choicest flower in the Christian's garden, it is the richest jewel in his crown, it is his princely robes, the summit of his royalty ; and therefore is the most pleasing and delightful object for a gracious eye to look upon. Sin is darkness, grace is light ; sin is hell, grace is heaven ; and what madness is it, to look more at darkness than at light ; more at hell than at heaven.

Tell me saints, does not God look more upon his people's graces than upon their weaknesses ? Surely he does. He looked more at David's and Asaph's uprightness, than their infirmities, though they were great and many. He eyed Job's patience more than his passion ;* "Remember the patience of Job," not a word of his impatience. He that drew Alexander, who had a scar upon his face,

* Sin is Satan's work, grace is God's work ; and is it not most meet that the child should eye most and mind most his father's work.

drew him with his finger upon the scar. God puts his fingers upon his people's scars, that no blemish may appear. Ah saints ! would that you esteemed it your highest glory, in this particular, to be like your heavenly Father ; by so doing, much sin would be prevented, the designs of wicked men frustrated, Satan out-witted, many wounds healed, many sorrowful hearts comforted, and God more abundantly honoured.

Rem. II. Solemnly consider, that love and unity make most for your own safety and security. We shall be *insuperabiles*, if we be *inseperabiles*; **INVINCIBLE**, if we be **INSEPARABLE**. The world may frown upon you, and plot against you, but they cannot hurt you. Unity is the best bond of safety, in every church and commonwealth.

And this the Scythian king in Plutarch, represented in a lively manner to his eighty sons, when he, being ready to die, commanded a bundle of arrows, fast bound together, to be given to them to break ; they all tried to break them, but being fast bound together, they could not ; he then caused the band to be cut, and they then broke them separately with ease : he applied it thus : " My sons, so long as you keep together, you will be invincible, but if the band of union is once broken between you, you will easily be broken in pieces.

Rem. III. Dwell upon those commands of God, that require love one to another. When your hearts begin to rise against each other, charge the commands of God upon them, and say to your souls, Hath not the eternal God commanded us to love them that love the Lord ? And is it not life to obey, and death to rebel ?* Therefore, look that you

* To act, or run cross to God's express command, though under pretence of revelation from God, is as much as a man's life is worth, as you may see in that sad story, 1 Kings xiii. 24.

fulfil the commands of the Lord, for his commands are not easily reversed, but are like those of the Medes, which cannot be changed. Oh! ponder much upon these commands of God : " A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." It is called a new* commandment, because it is renewed in the gospel, and set home by Christ's example, and because it is special and remarkable above all others. " This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another ; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. Let brotherly love continue, Love one another ; for love is of God, and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God." Oh ! dwell much upon these precious commands, that your love may be increased one to another.

In the primitive time it was much noticed by Heathens, that in the depth of misery, when fathers and mothers forsook their children, Christians (otherwise strangers) stood by one another, and their love of religion proved firmer than that of nature. Oh ! that there were more of this spirit among saints in these days. The world was once destroyed by water for the heat of lusts, and it is thought it will be again destroyed with fire, for the coldness of love.

Rem. IV. Dwell more upon those excellent things wherein you agree, than upon those things wherein you differ. If you did thus, how would sin in your hearts be subdued, your love raised, and your spirits be united one to another ? You agree

* Some conceive it to be an Hebraism, in which language new, rare, and excellent, are synonymous. John xv. 12, 17. Rom. xiii. 8. Heb. xiii. 1. 1 John iv. 7. 1 Pet. i 22. and iii. 8. 1 John iii. 11, 23. and iv. 11.

in most things, you differ but in few ; you agree in the weightiest things, as concerning God, Christ, the Spirit, the scripture, &c. you differ only in those points that have been long disputable amongst men of great piety and learning. Shall Herod and Pilate, Turks and Pagans, bears and lions, tigers and wolves, yea, shall a legion of devils agree in one body ? And shall not saints agree, who differ only in such non-essentials, as have little of God in them, and that will never hinder their meeting together in heaven ?

Rem. V. Solemnly consider, that God delights to be stiled " the God of Peace ;" and Christ to be stiled " the Prince of Peace," and king of Salem, that is, " King of Peace ;" and the Spirit is a " Spirit of Peace. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, &c." *Gal. v. 22.* Oh ! why then should not the saints be children of peace. Certainly men of foward, fiery spirits, cannot have that sweet evidence of their interest in the God of Peace, in the Prince of Peace, and in the Spirit of Peace, as those precious souls have, who follow after the things that make for love and peace. The very name of peace is sweet and comfortable ; the fruit and effects thereof pleasant and profitable, more to be desired than innumerable triumphs ; it is a blessing that ushers in a multitude of comforts.

Peace and love among the saints, is, that which will secure them and their mercies at home, yea, it will multiply them, and engage the God of mercy to crown them with the choicest blessings ; it will render them terrible, invincible, and successful abroad : love and peace among the saints will put the counsels of their enemies to a stand, and render all their enterprizes abortive ; it is that which doth most weaken their hands, disappoint their hopes, and bring them down.

Rem. VI. Make conscience of maintaining peace with God.* Ah Christians, I am afraid that your remissness herein, has occasioned much of that bitterness, and caused many of those divisions which are among you. You have not endeavoured, as you should, to maintain peace with God ; and therefore it is that you have so dreadfully broken peace among yourselves. The Lord hath promised, “ That when a man’s ways please him, he will make his enemies to be at peace with him.” How much more then would God make the children of peace to keep peace among themselves, if their ways did but please him ? All creatures are at his command. Laban followed Jacob with one troop, Esau met him with another, both with hostile intentions ; but Jacob’s ways pleasing the Lord, he by his mighty power so orders it, that Laban leaves him, and Esau meets him, both with a kiss ; he hath an oath of friendship of *one*, tears of the *other*, and peace with *both*.

Rem. VII. Dwell much upon that near relation and union that is between you. This consideration had great influence upon Abraham’s heart. “ And Abraham said unto Lot, let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen, for we are brethren.” That is a sweet word in the Psalmist, “ Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to live together in unity,” And as they are brethren, so they are all fellow-members. “ Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular,” 1 Cor. xii. 27. And again, “ We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,” Eph. v. 30. Shall the members of the natural body be serviceable and useful

* There is no fear of knowing too much, but there is much fear of practising too little.

to one another, and shall the members of this spiritual body cut and destroy one another ! Is it against the law of nature for the natural members to wound one another ? And is it not much more against the law of nature and of grace, for the members of Christ's glorious body to do so ? And as you are all fellow-members, so you are all fellow-soldiers under the same Captain of Salvation, the Lord Jesus, fighting against the world, the flesh, and the devil. And as you are fellow-soldiers, so you are fellow-sufferers under the same enemies, the devil, and the world. And as you are fellow-sufferers, so are you fellow-travellers towards the land of Canaan, " the New Jerusalem that is above. Here we have no abiding city, but we look for one to come." The heirs of heaven are strangers on earth. And as you are all fellow-travellers, so are you all fellow-heirs of the same crown and inheritance.

Rem. VIII. Dwell upon the miseries of discord. Dissolution is the daughter of dissension. And how doth the name and the way of Christ suffer by the discord of saints? How are many that are entering upon the ways of God hindered and grieved, and the mouths of the wicked opened, and their hearts hardened against God and his ways, by the discord of his people ? Remember the disagreement of Christians is the devil's triumph ; and is it not a sad thing, for Christians to give Satan cause to triumph ?

It was a notable saying of one, " Take away strife, and call back peace, lest you lose a man, your friend, and the devil your enemy rejoice over you both."

Rem. IX. Seriously consider, that it is no disgrace to be first to seek peace and reconciliation, but rather an honour. Abraham was older, and

more worthy than Lot, both in respect of grace and nature also, (for he was Lot's uncle) and yet he first sought peace of his inferior ; this God hath recorded to his honour. O ! how doth the God of peace, by his Spirit and messengers, pursue after peace with poor sinners. God first proclaims peace to us, " Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." God's grace first comes down to us, and who can resist such blessed and bleeding condescension, but souls in whom Satan, the god of this world, reigns indeed ? God is the injured party, and yet he first seeks peace with us. " I said, behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.*" How does the freeness and riches of his grace break forth, and shine upon poor souls. When a man goes from the sun, yet the sun-beams follow him : so when we go from the *Sun of Righteousness*, even then the beams of his love and mercy follow us. Christ first sent to Peter who had denied him, and the rest who had forsaken him, " Go your way and tell his Disciples and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him, as he said unto you," Mark. xvi. 7. Ah souls ! it is not a low, but a God-like action, when we are wronged by others, to be first in seeking after peace ; such works shew that God is with such a man's spirit.

Christians, it is not matter of liberty, whether you will or will not seek after peace ; but it is matter of duty that lies upon you, you are bound by express precepts to follow after peace ; and though it may seem to fly from you, yet you must pursue

* Isa. lxxv. 1. " Behold me, behold me :" it is repeated to shew God's exceeding readiness to shew favour and mercy to returning sinners.

after it. “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”* Peace and holiness are to be pursued after with the greatest eagerness that can be imagined. “Depart from evil, and do good, seek peace, and pursue it.” The Hebrew word that is here rendered *seek*, signifies to seek earnestly, vehemently, affectionately, studiously, industriously. *And pursue it.* That Hebrew word signifies earnestly to pursue, being a metaphor taken from the eagerness of wild beasts, or ravenous fowls, which will run or fly, both fast and far, rather than be disappointed of their prey. The Apostle presses the same duty upon the Romans. “Let us follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.” Ah! you foward, ill-tempered Christians, can you look upon these commands of God, without tears and blushing.

I have read a remarkable story of Aristippus, though an Heathen, who went of his own accord to Æschines his enemy, and said, “Shall we never be reconciled till we become a table-talk to all the country? And when Æschines answered, he would most gladly be at peace with him. *Remember then,* (said Aristippus) *that though I were the elder and better man, yet I sought first unto thee.* Thou art indeed, said Æschines, a far better man than I; for I began the quarrel, but thou the reconciliation. My prayer shall be, that this heathen may not rise in judgment against the towering professors of our times; “Who whet their tongues like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.”

Rem. X. Is, for saints to join and walk together

* Heb. xii. 14. “Follow after peace,” as the persecutor doth him whom he persecuteth.

in the ways of grace and holiness so far as they agree, making the word of God their only touch-stone, and judge of their actions. That is sweet advice the Apostle gives: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." Christians! God loses much, and you lose much; and Satan gains advantage by this, that you do not, that you will not walk lovingly together, so far as you conscientiously may in the ways of God. It is your sin and shame that you do not, that you will not pray, and hear, and confer, and mourn together,* &c. because that in some less things you are not agreed. What folly and madness is it in those, of whose way of a hundred miles, fourscore and nineteen lie together, yet they will not walk in company, because they cannot go the other mile together; yet such is the folly and madness of many Christians in these days, who will not do many things they may do, because they cannot do every thing they should do. I fear God will whip them into a better temper before he hath done with them: *He will break their bones, and pierce their hearts*, but he will cure them of this malady.

And be sure you make the word the only touch-stone, and judge of all persons and actions. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. viii. 20. It is best to make that the

* Great is the power of prayer. Mary, queen of Scots, was wont to say, "That she feared Mr. Knox's prayers more than an army of ten thousand men."

judge of all men and things now, that all shall be judged by in the latter day. "The word (*saith Christ*) that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day," John xii. 48. Make not your dim light, notions, and opinions, the judge of men's actions, but still judge by rule, and plead —*It is written.*

When a vain importunate man cried out in contest with a holy man, Hear me! hear me! the good man answered, "Neither do you hear me, nor I thee, but let us BOTH hear the Apostle."

Constantine, in all the disputes before him with the Arians, would always call for the word of God, as the only way, if not to convert, yet to stop their mouths.

Rem. XI. Be earnest in self-judging. "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged," 1 Cor. xi. 31. Were Christians' hearts more employed in judging and condemning themselves, they would not be so apt to judge and censure others, nor be so bitter against those who differ from them. There are no souls in the world so fearful to judge others, as those who most judge themselves; they are always careful to make a right judgment of men and things. They tremble to think, speak, or do evil against any one. They always put the best construction, and give the most favourable interpretation of men and things, because they are acquainted with their own weaknesses and frailties. I have one request to make of you, who often judge of other men's state, but never of your own; and often rashly and falsely; dwell every morning a little upon the following scriptures:

"Judge not that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. Judge not according to appearance, but

judge righteous judgment. Let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth, for God hath received him. Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God."

One Delphidius accused another before Julian, of that which he could not prove; the party denying the fact, Delphidius answers, if it be sufficient to deny what is laid to one's charge, who shall be found guilty? Julian answers, and if it be sufficient to be accused, who can be innocent?

Rem. XII. Above all, labour to be clothed with *humility*, 1 Pet. v. 5. Humility makes a man peaceable among brethren, fruitful in well-doing, cheerful in suffering, and constant in holy walking. Humility fits us for the highest services we owe to Christ, and yet will not neglect the lowest service to the meanest saint. *John* xiii. 5. Humility can feed upon the meanest dish, and yet it is maintained by the choicest delicacies, as God, Christ, and glory. Humility will make a man bless him that curses him, and pray for those that persecute him. An humble heart is an habitation for God, a scholar for Christ, a companion of angels, a preserver of grace, and meet for glory. Humility is the nurse of our graces, the preserver of our mercies, and the great promoter of holy duties. There are three things humility *cannot find* on this side heaven; it cannot find fulness in the creature, nor sweetness in sin, nor life in an ordinance without Christ. And there are three things an humble man *always finds* on this side heaven; an empty soul, a full Christ, and every mercy and duty sweet, wherein God is enjoyed. Humility can weep over other men's weaknesses, and joy and rejoice over their

graces. 1 *Thess.* i. 2—6. Humility will make a man quiet and contented in the meanest condition, and keep him from envying other men's prosperity. Humility honours those that are strong in grace, and puts two hands under those that are weak. *Eph.* iii. 8. Humility makes a man richer than other men, and teaches him to judge himself the poorest among men.* Humility will see much good abroad, when it can see but little at home. Ah, Christians ! though faith be the champion, and love the nurse of grace, yet humility is its beautifier; it casts a general glory upon all the graces in the soul. Did Christians more abound in humility, they would be less bitter and foward, and more gentle and meek, in their spirits and practices. Humility will make a man have high thoughts of others, and low thoughts of himself; it will make him see much glory and excellency in others, and much baseness and sinfulness in himself. “I judge, saith an humble soul, it is well with these Christians now, but it will be far better with them hereafter. They are now upon the borders of the New Jerusalem, and it will be but as a day before they slide into it.” An humble person is more willing, publicly to claim God, heaven, Christ, and every new-covenant blessing, for other gracious persons than for himself. Were Christians more humble, there would be less unhallowed fire, and more warnth of love among them, than there now is.

* The humble soul is like the violet, which grows low, hangs the head downwards, and hides itself with its own leaves: and were it not that the fragrant smell of his many virtues discovered him to the world, he would choose to live and die in secresy.

CHAPTER V.

*As Satan has his Devices to destroy gracious souls,
so he has his Devices to destroy poor ignorant
souls, and that sometimes,*

By causing them to affect ignorance, and to neglect and despise the means of knowledge. Ignorance is the mother of mistakes, the cause of trouble and error; it is the highway to hell, and makes a man both a prisoner and a slave to the devil at once. Ignorance robs a man of his dignity, and makes him a beast, yea, more miserable than the beasts that perish. There are none so easily, nor so frequently taken in Satan's snares, as ignorant persons: such are easily drawn to dance with the devil all day, and to dream of supping with Christ at night.—Now the Remedies against this Device are these :

Remedy I. Seriously consider, that an ignorant heart is an evil one; that the soul be *without knowledge, it is not good*, Prov. xix. 2. It is a heart in the dark, and no good can come into such a heart, but it must pass through the understanding: *But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness*, Matth. vi. 22. A leprous head and a leprous heart are inseparable companions. Ignorant hearts are evil, and they spare not to spit their venom in the very face of God, as Pharaoh did, when thick darkness was upon him.

Rem. II. Consider, that as blindness is the deformity of the face, so ignorance is the deformity of the soul. As the want of bodily eyes spoils the beauty of the face, so the want of spiritual eyes spoils the beauty of the soul. A man without knowledge is as a workman without hands, as a painter without eyes, as a traveller without legs, as

ship without sails, as a bird without wings, or as body without a soul.

Rem. III. Remember, that ignorance makes men the objects of God's hatred and wrath. "It is a people that do err in their hearts, and they have not known my ways. Unto whom I sware in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest. It is a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them." Christ has said, "That he will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God." Ignorance will end in vengeance.* When you see a poor blind man here, you do not loathe him, nor hate him, but you pity him; oh! but soul-blindness makes you abominable in the sight of God. God hath sworn that ignorant persons shall never enter into heaven; heaven itself would be a miserable state to such persons.

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee,† (or cut thee off,") Hos. iv. 6.

Rem. IV. Consider, that ignorance is a sin that leads to all other sins; all sins are found in ignorance. *You do err, not knowing the scriptures,* Matt. xxii. 29. It puts men upon hating and persecuting the saints. "They shall hate you, and put you out of the synagogues, yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me," John xvi. 2, 3. Paul imputes to his ignorance all his cruelties to Christians. "I was a blasphemer,

* Ps. xcv. 7, 8. Isa. xxvii. 11. They must needs err that know not God's ways, but they cannot wander so wide as to miss of hell. 2 Thess. i. 8.

† Rome saith ignorance is the mother of *devotion*; but the scripture saith it is the mother of *destruction*.

and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly," 1 Tim. i. 13. It was ignorance moved the Jews to crucify Christ: "Father forgive them," saith Christ of his murderers, "for they KNOW NOT what they do; for if the princes of this world had KNOWN, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory," 1 Cor. ii. 8. Sin was first the cause of ignorance, but now ignorance is the cause of all sin. "Swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and whoring, abound," said the Prophet, "because there is no knowledge of God in the land." There are none so bold and frequent in the ways of sin, as ignorant men; they mind not what they do or say against God, Christ, heaven, holiness, and their own souls. "Our tongues are our own, who shall controul us? They are corrupt and speak wickedly, concerning oppression, they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.—Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? Who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord." Psal. lxxiii. 8, 9. xiv. 4.

P A R T V.

AN

APPENDIX,

POINTING OUT FOUR MORE OF
SATAN'S DEVICES.

Whereby he prevents poor souls from receiving and embracing the Lord Jesus, and from relying upon him alone for everlasting happiness, according to the gospel : and Remedies against these Devices.

CHAPTER I.

His first Device to keep the soul from believing in Christ, is,

By suggesting the greatness and vileness of his sins. "What," saith Satan, "do you think that you shall ever obtain mercy by Christ, who have sinned with so high a hand against him? You had slighted the offers of grace, grieved the Spirit, and despised the word of God; and spoken and done all the evil that you could. *Jer. iii. 5.* No, no, he hath mercy, pardon, and righteousness for others, but not for you."—Now the Remedies against this Device are these :

Remedy I. Consider, that the greater your sins, the more you stand in need of a Saviour: the heavier your burden, the more you stand in need of one to help to bear it: the deeper the wound, the more need there is of the surgeon: the more dangerous the disease, the more need of the

physician. Who but mad men will say, " My burden is great, *therefore* I will not call for help; my wound is deep, *therefore* I will not call for balm; my disease is dangerous, *therefore* I will not go to the physician." Ah! it is spiritual madness, it is the devil's logic, to argue thus: " My sins are great, *therefore* I will not go to Christ; I dare not rest nor lean on Christ," &c. Whereas the soul should reason thus: " The greater my sins are, the more I stand in need of mercy and pardon: and, *therefore*, I will go to Christ, who delights in mercy, who pardons sin for his own name's sake."

Micah vii. 18. Is. xliii. 25.

Rem. II. Remember, that the promise of grace and mercy is to returning souls. And, therefore, though you may have been ever so wicked, yet if thou wilt return, God, and mercy, and pardon, shall be thine. *2 Chron. xxx. 9. Jer. iii. 12. Go and proclaim these words—Joel ii. 13. And rend your hearts, and not your garments—Is. lv. 7.* " Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon :" or as the Hebrew reads it, *He will multiply pardons.* So *Ezek. xviii.*

Sinner ! it is not your great transgressions, that can exclude you from mercy, if you will break off from your sins by repentance, and turn to the Fountain of mercy. The heart and arms of Christ are wide open to embrace the returning prodigal. It is not simply the greatness of your sins, but your obstinately persisting in sin, that will be your eternal overthrow.

Rem. III. Solemnly consider, that the greatest sinners have obtained mercy; and therefore all the

angels in heaven, all the men on earth, and all the devils in hell, cannot tell to the contrary, but that you also may obtain mercy. Manasseh was a notorious sinner, he made Judah to sin more wickedly than the Heathen did, whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel, and caused the streets of Jerusalem to run down with innocent blood. What a devil incarnate did he appear to be in these proceedings ? Yet when he humbled himself, and sought the Lord, the Lord was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him to Jerusalem, and made himself known unto him, and crowned him with mercy and loving kindness, as you may see in 2 *Chron.* xxxiii. So Paul was once a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, yet he obtained mercy, 1 *Tim.* i. 13. Mary Magdalen also was a notorious strumpet, one out of whom Christ cast seven devils, yet she was pardoned, and dearly beloved of Christ. *Luke* vii. *Mark* xvi. 9.

Bodin relates a story concerning a great rebel who had made a strong party against a Roman emperor. The emperor made proclamation, that whoever should bring the rebel, dead or alive, should have a great sum of money. The rebel hearing of this, came and presented himself before the emperor, and demanded the money. Now, said the emperor, " if I put him to death, the world will say, I did it to save my money." And so he pardoned the rebel, and gave him the money.

Oh sinners ! shall a Heathen do this, who had but a drop of mercy and compassion in him ? And will not Christ do much more, who hath all fulness of grace, mercy, and glory in himself ! Surely his bowels yearn toward even the worst of rebels. Oh ! if you do but come in, you will find him ready to pardon, yea, one made up of pardoning mercy.

Oh ! the readiness and willingness of Jesus Christ
to receive to favour the greatest rebels.*

Sinners ! if these bowels of mercy do not melt, win, and draw you, the justice of God will be a swift witness against you ; you will lie down in eternal misery for rejecting these offers of mercy. Christ hangs out still, as once that warlike Scythian did, a white flag of grace and mercy to returning sinners, who humble themselves at his feet for favour ; but if they still stand out, he will put forth his red, his bloody flag, and they shall die for ever by a hand of justice. Sinners, there is no way to avoid perishing by Christ's iron rod, but by kissing his golden sceptre !

Rem. IV. Consider, that Jesus Christ has nowhere, in all the scripture, excepted against the worst of sinners, that are willing to receive him, to believe in him, to rest upon him, for happiness and blessedness. Ah sinners ! why should you be more cruel and unmerciful to your own souls, than Christ is ? Christ has not excluded you from mercy, why then should you exclude your own souls ? Oh, that you would dwell often upon that choice scripture, John vi. 37. " All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out : (or as the original hath it) I will not cast out." 1 Cor. vi. 9—11.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, Heb. xiii. 8. That is a choice scripture, Acts x. 34, 35. " Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons. But in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

* Col. i. 19. ii. 3, 4. Neh. ix. 17. But thou art a God of pardons.

Rem. V. Consider, that the greater sinner thou hast been, the greater honour thou wilt be to Christ when he shall behold thee as the travail of his soul, Isa. liii. 11. *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.*

Rem. VI. Seriously consider, that the *longer* you keep from Christ, the *greater* and *stronger* your sins will grow. All divine power and strength against sin, is derived by the soul's union and communion with Christ, Rom. viii. 10. 1 John i. 6, 7. While you keep at a distance from Christ, you keep from that power which *alone* is able to make you sufficient to trample down strength, lead captivity captive, and slay the Goliath's that bid defiance to Christ. It is only faith in Christ that gives a man victory over sin, Satan, hell, and the world, 1 John v. 4. It is only faith in Christ that binds the strong man hand and foot, cures every spiritual disease, and makes a man strong in resisting, and happy in conquering. *Sin is always weakest where faith is strongest;* the most faithful soul is the most mortified soul. Sinner, remember this, there is no way on earth effectually to be rid of the guilt, filth, and power of sin, but by believing in a Saviour. It is not resolving, nor complaining; it is not mourning, but believing, that will make you divinely victorious over that body of sin that is too strong for you, and that will certainly be your ruin, if not ruined by the hand of faith.

Rem. VII. Wisely consider, that as there is *nothing* in Christ to *discourage* the greatest sinners from believing in him, so there is *every thing* in Christ that may *encourage* them to *believe* in him, to rest and lean upon him, for all happiness and blessedness. Cant. i. 3. If you look upon his natures, his dispositions, his names, his titles, his offices, as King, Priest, and Prophet, you will find

nothing to discourage the greatest sinners from believing in him, but many things to encourage them to receive him, to believe on him. *Col.* i. 19. ii. 3. *Cant.* v. 10. Christ is the greatest, the most suitable, and necessary good ; he is a real, an eternal, and a soul-satisfying good Sinners, are you poor ? Christ has gold to enrich you : are you naked ? He has royal robes of righteousness to clothe you : are you blind ? He has eye-salve to enlighten you : are you hungry ? He will be manna to feed you : are you thirsty ? He will be a well of living water to refresh you : are you wounded ? He has a balm under his wings to heal you : are you sick ? He is a physician to cure you : are you prisoners ? He has laid down a ransom for you. O then believe in him, and then, " Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Nay, your iniquities shall be forgotten, as well as forgiven ; they shall be remembered no more : God will cast them behind his back, he will cast them into the depths of the sea. *Is.* i. 18. xliii. 25. xxxviii. 17. *Micah* vii. 19.

Rem. VIII. Seriously consider the absolute necessity of believing in Christ. " The fearful and unbelieving, &c. shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. If ye believe not that I am he" (saith Christ) *ye shall die in your sins.* *John* viii. 24. And he that dies in his sins, must come to judgment, and depart to hell in his sins. Every unbeliever is a condemned man. *He that believeth not* (saith John) *is condemned ALREADY.* *John* iii 18, 36. Sinners ! the law, the gospel, and your own consciences, have passed the sentence of condemnation upon you, and there is no way to escape the sentence, but by believing in Christ, and

therefore my counsel is this: Stir up yourselves to lay hold on the Lord Jesus, and look up to him, and wait on him, from whom every good and perfect gift comes, and give him no rest till he has given you that jewel, FAITH, which is worth more than heaven and earth, and which will make you happy in life, joyful in death, and glorious in the day of Christ. *Isa. lxiv. 7. James i. 17. Isa. lxii. 7.*

CHAPTER II.

The second Device that Satan has to keep poor sinners from believing in, and closing with a Saviour, is,

By suggesting to them their unworthiness. Ah, saith Satan! "As you are worthy of the greatest misery, so you are unworthy of the least crumb of mercy. Do you think, saith Satan, that ever Christ will own, receive, or embrace such an unworthy wretch as you are? No, no, if there were any worthiness in you, then indeed Christ might be willing to be entertained by you. You are unworthy to receive Christ into your house, how much more unworthy are you to entertain Christ in your heart? —Now the Remedies against this Device are these:

Remedy I. Seriously consider, that God has nowhere in the scripture required any worthiness in the creature *before* believing in Christ. If you make a diligent search through all the scripture, you shall not find one word that represents God, as requiring any worthiness in the creature, *before* the soul believes and rests upon Christ for happiness and blessedness; and why then should that be an hindrance to your faith, which God no where requires of you before you come to Christ, that you may have life? Ah, sinners! remember Satan objects your unworthiness against you, only from a

design to keep Christ and your souls asunder for ever, and therefore, notwithstanding all your unworthiness, rest upon Christ, come to him, and believe in him, and you are happy for ever. John vi. 40, 47.

Rem. II. Wisely consider that none ever received and embraced Christ, and obtained mercy and pardon from him, *but such as felt themselves unworthy.* Pray what worthiness was there in Matthew, Zaccheus, Manasseh, Paul, and Lydia, before their coming to Christ, or before their faith in Christ? Surely none. Ah sinners! you should reason thus: Christ has bestowed the choicest mercies, the greatest favours, the highest dignities, the sweetest privileges, upon unworthy sinners; and therefore, O our souls, do not faint, do not despair; but patiently and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.

Rem. III. Consider, that if the soul will keep from Christ till it is worthy, it will never come to him; it will never embrace, nor be one with Christ, and so it must lie down in everlasting sorrow. *Is. l. 11.* God has laid up all worthiness in Christ, that the creature may know where to find it, and seek after it. There is no way on earth for unworthy souls to become worthy but by believing in Christ: believing in Christ will make slaves become worthy sons; enemies, become worthy friends. God calls none worthy, nor carries it towards any as worthy, but believers, who are made worthy by the worthiness of Christ's person, righteousness, satisfaction, and intercession, &c. *John i. 12. James ii. 12. Rev. iii. 4.*

Rem. IV. Solemnly consider, that if you make a diligent search into your own hearts, you will find that it is your own pride and folly that inclines you to bring worthiness to Christ. You would fain

bring something to Christ that might render you acceptable to him, you are loth to come empty handed. The Lord cries out, *Is. lv. 1, 2.* "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye." Here the Lord calls upon pennyless, unworthy souls, to come and partake of his precious favours freely. But sinners are proud and foolish, and because they have no money, no worthiness to bring, they will not come, though he freely invites them. Ah sinners ! what is more just than that *you* should perish for ever, who prefer the things of the world, husks among swine, before the milk and wine, the sweet and precious things of the gospel, that are so freely held forth to you.. Well, sinners, remember this, it is not so much the sense of your unworthiness, *as your pride*, that keeps you from embracing the Lord Jesus, as your Saviour.

CHAPTER III.

The third Device that Satan has to keep poor sinners from believing in, and closing with a Saviour, is,

By suggesting to them the want of preparations and qualifications. Saith Satan, " You are not prepared to entertain Christ; you are not humbled and justified; you are not heart-sick of sin; you have not been under horrors and terrors as such and such persons have; you must stay till you are prepared and qualified to receive the Lord Jesus."—Now the Remedies against this Device are these :

Remedy I. Consider, that such as have not been so prepared and qualified, as Satan suggests, have received Christ, believed in Christ, and have been saved by Christ. Matthew was called, sitting at the receipt of custom, and such was the power

that went with Christ's call, that he was made to follow him, Matt. ix. 9. We read not of either horrors or terrors, that he was under before he was called by Christ. Pray what preparations and qualifications were found in Zaccheus, Paul, the Jailor, and Lydia, before their conversion ? Luke xix. 9. Acts xvi. God brings in some by the sweet and still voice of the gospel ; and usually such who are thus brought into Christ, are the most humble, choice, and fruitful Christians. God is a free agent to work by law or gospel ; by smiles or frowns ; by presenting hell or heaven to sinners' souls. God thunders from mount Sinai upon some souls, and conquers them by thundering. God speaks to others in a still voice, and by that conquers them. You that are brought to Christ by the law, do not judge and condemn them that are brought to Christ by the gospel ; and you that are brought to Christ by the gospel, do not despise those that are brought to Christ by the law. Some are brought to Christ by fire, storms, and tempests ; others by more easy and gentle gales of the Spirit. Thrice happy are those souls who are brought to Christ, whether it be in a winter's night, or a summer's day.

Rem. II. Dwell upon the following scriptures, which clearly shew, that poor sinners who have no qualifications to meet with Christ, to receive and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, may, notwithstanding, believe, rest, and lean upon him for happiness and blessedness, according to the gospel. Read *Prov.* i. 20, 33. and *chap. viii.* 1—11. and *chap. ix.* 1—6. *John* iii. 14—18, 36. *Rev.* iii. 15—20. Here the Lord Jesus Christ stands knocking at the Laodicean's door ; he would fain have them sup with him, that he might sup with them ; that is, that they might have intimate communion and fellowship one with another.

Now pray tell me, what preparations and qualifications had these Laodiceans to entertain Christ ? Surely none ; for they were luke-warm, they were *neither hot nor cold*, they were *wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*, and yet Christ, to shew his free grace, and his condescending love, invites the very worst of sinners to receive him, though they were no ways prepared or qualified to entertain him.

Rem. III. Seriously consider, that the Lord does not in all the scripture, require such preparations and qualifications *before* men come to Christ, believe in Christ, or entertain, or embrace the Lord Jesus.* Believing in Christ is the great thing that God presses upon sinners throughout the scripture : as all know, who know any thing of scripture.

Object. But does not Christ say, “ Come unto me all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matth. xi. 28.

To this I shall give these three answers :

1. That though the invitation is to such that *Labour and are heavy laden*, yet the promise of giving rest, is made to *coming, to believing souls*.

2. That this scripture proves and shews, that such who labour under sin, as under a heavy burden, and are laden with the guilt of sin, and sense of God’s displeasure, ought to come to Christ for rest ; but it does not prove that *only such* must come to Christ, nor that *all men* must be thus burdened, and laden with the sense of their sins, and the wrath of God, before they come to Christ.

Poor sinners, when they are under the sense of sin, and wrath of God, are prone to run from

* Rom. iv. 5. God justifies the ungodly. It is a comfort that he does justify such, or there could be no hope, since all are sinners, or ungodly by nature.

creature to creature, and from duty to duty, and from ordinance to ordinance, to find rest; and if they could find it in any thing, or creature, Christ should never hear from them; but here the Lord sweetly invites them; and to encourage them he engages himself to give them rest. *Come* (saith Christ) *and I will give you rest.* I will not shew you, nor barely tell you of rest, but *I will give you rest.* I am faithfulness itself, and cannot lie, *I will give you rest.* I that have the greatest *power*, the greatest *will*, the greatest *right* to give it. *Come laden sinners, and I will give you rest.* Rest is the most desirable, the most suitable good, and to you the greatest good. *Come*, saith Christ, that *is, Believe in me, and I will give you rest.* I will give you peace with God, and peace with conscience: I will turn your storm into an everlasting calm. I will give you such rest, that the world can neither give to you, nor take from you.

3. I answer:—No one scripture expresses the whole mind of God, therefore do but compare this one scripture with those several scriptures that are laid down in the second remedy last mentioned, and it will clearly appear, that though men are not thus burdened and laden with their sins, and filled with horror and terror, they may come to Christ, they may receive and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rem. IV. Consider, that all the trouble, sorrow, shame, and mourning for sin, which is acceptable to God, flows from faith in Christ, as the stream from the fountain, as the branch from the root, and as the effect from the cause. *Zecl. xii. 10.* “They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him.” All gospel mourning flows from believing; they shall first look, and then mourn.

CHAPTER IV.

The fourth Device that Satan has to keep poor sinners from believing in, and closing with a Saviour, is,

By suggesting to them that Christ is unwilling to save. It is true, saith Satan, Christ is able to save you, But is he willing ? Surely, though he is able, yet he is not willing to save such a wretch as you are ; you have trampled his blood under your feet, and have lived in open rebellion against him all your days.—The Remedy against this Device of Satan, is briefly to consider these few things :

1st. The great journey that Christ has taken, from heaven to earth, on purpose to save sinners, clearly demonstrates his willingness to save them. *Matt. ix. 13.* “ I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,” also see *1 Tim. i. 15.*

2d. His divesting himself of his glory in order to the salvation of sinners, manifests his willingness to save them. He leaves his Father’s bosom, he puts off his glorious robes, and lays aside his glorious crown, and bids adieu to his glittering courtiers, the angels, for a season ; and all that he may accomplish the salvation of sinners.

3d. That sea of sin, of wrath, of trouble, and of blood that Jesus Christ waded through, that sinners might be pardoned, justified, reconciled, and saved, strongly declares his willingness to save them. *2 Cor. v. 19, 20.*

4th. His sending his ambassadors early and late, to entreat sinners to be reconciled to him ; loudly proclaims his readiness and willingness to save them.

5th. His complaints against such as refuse him, and who will not be saved by him, loudly proclaim his willingness to save sinners. *John i. 11.*

" He came unto his own, and his own received him not." So in *John* v. 40. " Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

6th. The joy and delight that he takes in the conversion of sinners, proves his willingness that they should be saved. *Luke* xv. 7. " I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance." God the Father rejoices at the return of his prodigal son; Christ rejoices to see the travail of his soul; the Holy Spirit rejoices that he hath another temple to dwell in; and the angels rejoice that they have another brother to delight in.

CHAPTER V.

*Here follows seven Characters of False-teachers,
which let me add for a close, viz.*

THAT Satan labours hard by false teachers, who are his messengers and ambassadors to deceive, delude, and destroy for ever the precious souls of men.* *Jer.* xxiii. 13. *Mic.* iii. 5. They seduce them, and carry them out of the right way into bye-paths, and lead them into error. *Beware of false prophets*, *Matth.* vii. 14, 15. These draw out the very life-blood of souls. *Phil.* iii. 2. These kiss and kill; they cry, peace, peace, till precious souls fall into everlasting flames.—You may know them by the following characters.

I. They are men-pleasers; they preach more to please the ear, than to mend the heart.† *Isa.* xxx. 10.

* *Acts* xx. 28—30. *2 Cor.* xi. 13, 15. *Eph.* iv. 14. *2 Tim.* iii. 4—6. *Tit.* i. 11, 12. *2 Pet.* ii. 18, 19.

† But so are not true teachers. *Gal.* i. 10. *1 Thes.* ii. 1—4.

Jer. v. 30, 31. They handle holy things rather to shew their own abilities, than with fear and reverence. False teachers are soul destroyers, they are like an unskilful surgeon, who skins over the wound, but never heals it. Flattery undid Ahab and Herod, Nero and Alexander. False teachers are hell's greatest contributors. "Not bitter, but flattering words do all the mischief," said Valerian, the Roman emperor.

II. False teachers are active in casting dirt, scorn, and reproach upon the persons, names, and credit of Christ's most faithful ambassadors. Thus Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, charged Moses and Aaron that they took too much upon them, seeing all the congregation were holy. *Num.* xvi. 3, 9. And so Ahab's false prophets fell foul on good Micaiah, paying him with blows for want of better reasons. *1 Kings* xxii. 24. Yea Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, had his ministry undermined, and his reputation blasted by false teachers. *2 Cor.* xi. 10. They rather contemn him, than admire him; they look upon him as a dunce rather than a doctor. And the same hard measure had our Lord Jesus from the Scribes and Pharisees, who laboured as for life, to build their own credit upon the ruin of his reputation. I suppose false teacher's mind not that saying of Augustin, "He that willingly takes from my good name, unwillingly adds to my reward."

III. They are inventors of the devices and visions of their own heads and hearts. *Matt.* xxiv. 4, 5, 11, 14. *Tit.* i. 10. *Jer.* xiv. 14. chap. xxiii. 16. They are Satan's great benefactors, and such as divine justice will reward with punishment in hell as the greatest malefactors, if the Physician of souls do not prevent it.

IV. They easily pass over the great and weighty things both of law and gospel, and stand most upon those things that are of least moment and concern to the souls of men. *1 Tim.* i. 5—7. *Matt.* xxiii. 23. False teachers are particular in the lesser things of the law, and as negligent in the greater. *1 Tim.* vi. 3—5. If such teachers are not the veriest hypocrites, I know nothing. *Rom.* ii. 22. The earth groans to bear them, and hell is prepared for them. *Matt.* xxiv. 51.

V. False teachers cover and colour their dangerous principles and foul impostures, with very fair speeches, and plausible pretences; with high notions, and golden expressions. They know sugared poison goes down sweetly : they wrap up their most pernicious (soul-killing) pills in gold, but all their flourishes will prove at last but flowery lies.

VI. False teachers *strive more to win over men to their opinions, than to better them in their conduct.* *Matth.* xxiii. 15. They busy themselves most about men's *heads*; their work is not to better their *hearts*, and mend their *lives*: and in this they are very much like their father the devil.

VII. False teachers make merchandise of their followers. *2 Pet.* ii. 1—3. They eye your goods more than your edification; and mind more the serving of themselves, than the saving of your souls: so they may have your substance, they care not if Satan have your souls, *Rev.* xviii. 11—13. False teachers are the great worshippers of the golden calf. *Jer.* vi. 13.

Now by these characters you may know them, and so shun them, and deliver your souls out of their dangerous snares: which that you may, my prayers shall meet yours at the throne of grace.

AND now to prevent objections, I shall lay down some Propositions or conclusions concerning Satan and his Devices, and then give you the Reasons of the point, and so come to make some use and application of the whole to ourselves.

PART VI.

PROPOSITIONS

CONCERNING

SATAN AND HIS DEVICES,

With some Reasons and Helps upon the subject..

CHAPTER I.

Proposition I.

THOUGH Satan have his Devices to draw souls to sin, yet we must be careful that we do not lay all our temptations upon Satan, and so wrong the devil, fathering that upon him, that belongs to our own evil hearts. I think oftentimes men charge that upon the devil, that should be charged upon themselves, like Eve, Gen. iii. 13. Sin and shifting came into the world together. Such is the baseness of our hearts, that they will be naught, very naught, and then will father that naughtiness upon Satan. Matt. v. 19. The whole constitution of man is out of fraine, the understanding is dark, the will cross, the memory treacherous, the affections warped, the conscience corrupted, the tongue poisoned, and the heart wholly and continually evil. Satan can only persuade to sin by artifice, he cannot compel to it by might; he may tempt us, but without ourselves he cannot conquer us; he may entice us, but without ourselves he cannot hurt us.

II. Satan hath a great hand in most sins. It was Satan that tempted our first parents to rebellion, Gen. iii. 1, 4, 5. that provoked David to number the people, 1 Chron. xxi. 1. that put Peter upon rebuking Christ; therefore saith Christ, *Get thee behind me Satan*, Matth. xvi. 22, 23. It was Satan

that put Cain upon murdering of righteous Abel ; therefore he is called a murderer from the beginning. John viii. 44. It was Satan that put treason into the heart of Judas against Christ. As the hand of Joab was in the tale of the woman of Tekoa, so Satan's hand is usually in all the sins that men commit.

III. Satan must have a double leave before he can do any thing against us. He must have leave from God, and leave from ourselves, before he succeeds in any thing against our happiness ; he must have his commission from God, as you may see in the case of Job ; though the devil had malice enough to destroy him ; yet he had not so much as power to touch him, till God gave him permission. Job i. 11, 12. and ii. 3—5.

And as Satan must have leave from God, so he must have leave from us. When he tempts, we must assent ; when he makes offers we must hearken ; when he commands, we must obey ; or else all his labour and temptations will be in vain, and the evil he tempts us to shall be put down only to his account. That is a remarkable passage in Acts v. 3. The Apostle doth not expostulate with Satan. But he expostulates with Ananias. If when a temptation come, a man cry out, and saith, " Ah Lord ! here is a temptation that would force me, that would pollute my soul, and I have no strength to withstand it ; Oh ! help, help, for thy honour's sake, for thy Son's sake, for thy promise' sake ; " it is a sign that Satan hath not gained your consent.

IV. None but spiritual weapons can be useful and serviceable to the soul, in fighting and combating with the devil ; this the apostle shews, Eph. vi. 13. 2 Cor. x. 4. You have not to do with a weak, but with a mighty enemy. and therefore you

need mighty weapons, and that they cannot be, unless they are spiritual. Carnal weapons have no might nor spirit in them towards making a conquest upon Satan. It was not David's sling nor stone, that gave him the honour and advantage of setting his feet upon Goliah, but his faith in the name of the Lord of Hosts. 1 Sam. xvii. 45. He that fights against Satan, in the strength of *his own* resolutions, constitution, or education, will certainly fly and fall before him. The only way to stand, conquer, and triumph, is still to plead, "*It is written,*" Matth. iv. 10. It is God that gives victory, and that should be every Christian's motto. There is no sword but the two-edged sword of the Spirit, that will be found to be proof, when a soul comes to engage against Satan: therefore when you are tempted to uncleanness, plead, it is written, "Be ye holy, as I am holy;" and, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." If he tempt you to distrust God's providence and fatherly care of you, plead his promises, as it is written, "There is no want to them that fear him," 1 Pet. i. 16. 2 Cor. vii. 1. Ps. xxxiv. 9.

If he tempt you to fear, that you shall faint and fall, and never be able to reach the end of the race set before you, plead, it is written, "The righteous shall hold on his way," Ps. lxxxiv. 11. Job xvii. 9.

It is written, "*I will make an everlasting covenant with them,*" &c. Jer. xxxii. 40.

It is written, "They that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength," Isa. xl. 31.

It is written, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee," &c. Isa. liv. 7, 8, 10.

It is written, *Can a woman forget her sucking child? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee,* Isa. xl ix. 15, 16.

VI. God will shortly tread down Satan under the saint's feet. Christ, our champion, hath already taken the field, and will shortly set our feet upon the necks of our spiritual enemies. Satan is a foiled adversary, Christ hath led him captive, and triumphed over him upon the cross: Christ hath already overcome him, and put weapons into your hands, that you may overcome him also, and set your feet upon his neck. Though Satan be a roaring lion, yet Christ, who is the lion of the tribe of Judah, will make him fly and fall before you.

CHAPTER II.

I now come to offer a few Reasons upon the Subject, and so draw to a Close.

Reason I.

Is, that their hearts may be kept in an humble, praying, and watchful frame. Hath Satan so many Devices to ensnare and ruin the souls of men? How should this awaken drowsy souls, and make them stand upon their watch? A saint should be like a seraphim, having eyes behind and before, that he may avoid Satan's snares, and stand fast in the hour of temptation.

II. That they may be preserved from the malice and enmity that is in Satan, against the souls of men. Satan is full of envy and enmity, and that makes him so very studious to suit his snares and plots to the tempers, constitutions, fancies, and callings of men, that thereby he may make them as miserable as himself.

III. That the excellency and power of God's grace may be the more illustrated; that notwithstanding all the plots, devices, and stratagems of Satan, yet God will make them victorious here, and crown them with glory hereafter. The greater and

the more subtle the enemies of the children of Israel were, the more brilliantly did the Divine power, wisdom, and goodness shine; and that, notwithstanding all the power, plots, and stratagems of their enemies, yet to Canaan they were brought at last. When the apostle Paul had weighed this subject in his own case, he sits down and glories in his infirmities and distresses, and in Satan's buffettings, that the power of Christ might rest upon him. 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8, 9.

CHAPTER III.

The Use of the Subject.

IF Satan has such a world of Devices and stratagems to ensnare and ruin the souls of men, then, instead of wondering that so few are saved, we may wonder that *any* are saved.

But this is not the main thing that I intend to speak to, my present business is to set before you some special rules and helps against all his Devices.

USE I. If you would not be taken by any of Satan's Devices, then walk by rule, Prov. xv. 24. Gal. vi. 16. Phil. iii. 6. He that walks by rule, walks most safely, most honourably, most comfortably. When men cast off the word, then God casts off them, and Satan takes them by the hand, and leads them into his snares at pleasure. Those who keep to the rule, will be kept in the hour of temptation: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Rev. iii. 10.

II. Take heed of vexing and grieving the holy Spirit of God. It is the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is best able to discover to us the snares

of Satan. Ah ! if you grieve that sweet and blessed Spirit, who alone can secure you from Satan's depths, by whom will you be secured ? The Spirit of the Lord is your counsellor, your comforter, and your strength. It is only the Spirit that makes a man too great for Satan to conquer. " Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." Isa. xlivi. 10. Ps. lxxii. 2, 3. 1 Thess. v. 16. Acts ii. 4. 1 John iv. 4.

III. Labour for more heavenly wisdom : you have but little knowledge to what others have, and to what you might have had, had you not been so remiss. There are many *knowing*, but there are but few *wise* souls ; there is oftentimes a great deal of knowledge, where there is but little wisdom to improve that knowledge ; knowledge without wisdom, is like mettle in a blind horse, which is often an occasion of the rider's fall, and of his bones being broken. It is not the most knowing, but the most wise Christian, that sees, avoids, and escapes Satan's snares. " The way of life is above to the wise, (saith Solomon) that he may depart from hell beneath :" Prov. xv. 24. Heavenly wisdom makes a man delight to fly high above the earth ; and the higher any man flies, the more he is out of the reach of Satan's snares : Ah, souls ! you had need of a great deal of heavenly wisdom, to see where, and how Satan lays his baits and snares ; and to find out proper Remedies against his Devices, and to apply those Remedies seasonably, inwardly, and effectually to your own hearts, that so you may avoid the snares which that evil one hath laid for your precious souls.

IV. Make present resistance against his first motions ; it is safe to resist, it is dangerous to dispute. Eve disputes, and falls in Paradise ; Gen. iii. Job resists, and conquers upon the dunghill. *He that*

will play with Satan's bait, will quickly be taken with his hook. The promise of conquest is made to *resisting*, not to *disputing*: Resist the devil and he shall flee from you.

V. Labour to be filled with the Spirit; the Spirit of the Lord is a Spirit of light and power, and what can a soul do without light and power against spiritual wickedness in high places? Eph. vi. 12. It is not enough that you have the Spirit, but you must be filled with the Spirit; *i. e.* labour for abundance of the Spirit; he that thinks he has enough of the Holy Spirit, will quickly find himself vanquished by the enemy. Therefore labour more to have your hearts filled with the Spirit, than to have your heads filled with notions, your chests with silver, or your bags with gold, so shall you escape the snares of this fowler, and triumph over all his plots.

VI. Keep humble: an humble heart will rather lie in the dust than rise by wickedness, and sooner part with all than the peace of a good conscience. Humility keeps the soul from many darts cast by Satan, and snares of his spreading; as the low shrubs are free from many blasts of wind, which shake and rend the taller trees. The devil hath least power to fasten by temptation on him that is most humble.

VII. Keep a strong, close, and constant watch; a secure soul is already ensnared; that soul that will not watch against temptations, will certainly fall before the power of it. Satan works most strongly on the fancy, when the soul is drowsy. The time of security is Satan's opportunity to fall upon the soul, and spoil it, as Joshua did the men of Ai. The best way to be safe and secure from all Satan's assaults, is with Nehemiah and the Jews, to watch and pray, and pray and watch.

Shall Satan keep a crafty watch, and shall not Christians keep a holy spiritual watch. Our whole life is beset with temptations. Satan watches all opportunities to break our peace, to wound our consciences, lessen our comforts, impair our graces, darken our evidences, and to damp our assurances. Oh! what need have we then to be always upon our watch-tower, lest we be surprised by this subtle serpent? Watchfulness is a waking, a rousing up of the soul; it is a continual, careful observation of our hearts and ways, in all the turnings of our lives, that we still keep close to God and his word.

I shall conclude this seventh head with this advice: Remember, our enemies are so subtle, that they will bite us, and strike us where they may do us most mischief, and therefore it very much concerns us to stand always upon our guard.

VIII. Keep up your communion with God. Your strength to stand, and withstand Satan's fiery darts, is from your communion with God; a soul high in communion with God may be tempted, but will not easily be conquered, such a soul will fight it out to the death. Communion is the result of union; communion is a reciprocal exchange between Christ and a gracious soul; communion is Jacob's ladder, where you have Christ sweetly coming down into the soul, and the soul by divine influences sweetly ascending up to Christ. Communion with Christ is very inflaming, raising, and strengthening; while Sampson kept up communion with God, no enemy could stand before him, but he goes on conquering and to conquer; but when he grows remiss, he quickly falls before his enemies; it will be so with your souls, so long as your communion with God is maintained, you will be too hard for spiritual wickedness in high places. Communion with God

is a shield upon land, as well as an anchor at sea : it is a sword to defend you, as well as a staff to support you ; therefore keep up communion.

IX. Engage not against Satan in your own strength, but be every day drawing fresh virtue and strength from the Lord Jesus. Certainly, that soul that engages against any old or new temptation, without *new* strength, *new* influences from on high, will fall before the power of the temptation. You may see this in Peter ; he rested upon some old received strength, "Though all men should deny thee, yet will not I," and therefore he falls sadly before a new temptation ; he curses, and swears, and denies Him thrice, who had thrice appeared gloriously to him : Ah, souls ! when the snare is spread, look up to Jesus Christ, who is lifted up in the gospel, as the brazen serpent was in the wilderness ; and say to him, " Dear Lord, here is a new snare laid to catch my soul, and grace formerly received, without fresh supplies from thy blessed bosom, will not deliver me from it : oh ! give me new strength, new power, new influences, new measures of grace, that so I may escape this snare : ah, souls ! remember this, that your strength to stand and overcome, must not be expected from graces received, but from the fresh and renewing influences of heaven."

X. Be much in prayer ; prayer is a shelter to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to the devil ; David's heart was oft more out of tune than his harp ; he prays, and then in spite of the devil, cries, " Return unto thy rest, O my soul !" Christians must do as Dedalus did, when he could not escape by a way upon earth, he went by the way of heaven ; that is, the Christian must go by the way of prayer, which is the only way left to escape Satan's snares.

XI. Be thankful. Those who escape Satan's snares, that are not taken by him at his will, should be thankful. Christians, it is your duty with that

princely prophet, David, to call upon your souls, and say, " Bless the Lord, O our souls, and all that is within us, bless his holy name," (Ps. ciii. 1, 2.) who hath not given us to be a prey to Satan, and to be taken by those snares that he hath laid for our souls ; the sense of this great favour wrought up David's heart and praises. Ps. cxxiv. 6, 7.

Will you be thankful for escaping the snares that men spread for your lives, or estates ? and will you not be much more thankful for escaping those snares that Satan has laid for your precious souls ?

Remember this, that deliverance from Satan's snares carries with it the clearest, and the greatest evidence, that the soul and heart of God are towards us. Many men, by a common hand of providence, escape many snares that men have laid for them, but yet escape not the snares that Satan lays for them. Saul, and Judas, and Demas, doubtless escaped many snares laid for them by men, but none of them escaped the snares of the devil. Many men are raised above the snares of men by a common hand of providence, but are left to fall into the snares of the devil by a hand of justice ; your deliverance from Satan's snares is a fruit of special love. Can you thus look upon it, and not be thankful, oh, precious soul ? I judge not.

XII. The last use of this point is to exhort Christians to long to be at home ! oh ! long to be in the bosom of Christ, long to be in the land of Canaan ; for this world, this wilderness is full of snares, all employments and all enjoyments are full of snares ; for Satan is so powerful and subtle, that he will oftentimes make our greatest, nearest, and dearest mercies to become our greatest snares : sometimes he will make the wife that lies in the bosom, to be a snare to a man, as Job's ; sometimes he will make the child to be a snare, as Absalom was, and as Eli's sons were ; and sometimes he will

make the servant to be a snare, as Joseph was to his mistress. Ah, souls, Satan is so cunning and artful, that he can turn your cups, your clothes, your houses, your gardens, and all your recreations into snares. And oh! how should the consideration of these things cause all your souls to say with the church, The slave longs for his freedom! the captive for his ransom! the traveller for his inn! and the mariner for his harbour! And shall not the people of the Lord long much more to be in the bosom of Christ? As the Apostle said, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ." Phil. i. 23. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.—For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." 2 Cor. v. 1—4.

What Paul once spake of bonds and afflictions, that they attended him in every place, *that* may all the saints say of Satan's snares, that they attend them in every place; which should cause them to cry out, Let us go hence, Let us go hence; and to say with Monica, Augustin's mother, What do we here? Why depart we not hence? Why fly we no swifter? Ah, souls! till you are taken up into the bosom of Christ, your comforts will not be full, pure, and constant; till then, Satan will be beating you, and spreading snares to entangle you, therefore you should always be crying out with the church, 'Come, Lord Jesus.' Rev. xxii. 20. Is not Christ the star of Jacob, that giveth light to them that are in darkness? That Prince of peace, who brings the olive branch of peace to souls that are perplexed? Is not the greatest worth and wealth

in him ? Are not the little excellencies and perfections of all creatures epitomized in him ? Is he not the crown of crowns, the glory of glories, and the heaven of heavens ? Oh ! then be still longing after a full, clear, and constant enjoyment of Christ in heaven ; for till then, Satan will still have schemes and designs against you ; he acts by an united power, and will never let you rest, till you are taken to everlasting glory in the bosom of Christ.



IMPEDIMENTS TO ASSURANCE,
AND
MEANS OF REMOVING THEM;

From a Treatise on Assurance, by the same Author.

I SHALL now point out several impediments which keep poor souls from assurance; with means or helps for removing the same.

I. The *first* impediment to assurance is, despairing thoughts of mercy.

These make a man fight against God with his own weapons, and suck poison out of the sweetest promises. They make a man entertain hard thoughts of God, argue against his own soul and happiness, and turn his greatest helps into hindrances. A despairing soul is a terror to itself, troubled on every side, and full of fears and fightings. It is a burden to others, but the greatest burden to itself; still terrifying, tormenting, and condemning itself. In this situation, how is it possible to attain a well-grounded assurance? Therefore, give me leave to expostulate with such souls, in order to help them out of their despair.

1. Tell me, is not despair an exceeding vile and contemptible sin? Is it not a dishonour to God, a reproach to Christ, and a murderer of souls? Despair flows from the greatest evil in the world; from unbelief; from ignorance, and misapprehensions of God and his grace; from mistakes of scripture; and from Satan, who being for ever cast out of Paradise, labours with all his art and might to bring souls to despair of ever entering there. Despairing souls, let the greatness of this sin effectually awaken you to strive, as for life, to get out of this condition, which is as sinful as it is doleful, and as much to be hated as to be lamented.

2. Tell me, did not despairing Judas perish, while the murderers of Christ believing on him were saved? Acts ii. 23. Did not Judas sin more heinously by despairing, than by betraying Christ?

The arms of mercy were opened to receive Manasseh. The soul of Mary Magdalen was full of devils; and yet Christ cast them out, and made her heart his temple. Paul was full of impiety and blasphemy, of rage and malice against Christ, his people and ways; and yet, behold, Paul is a chosen vessel; is caught up into the third heaven; and is replenished with the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost. The Apostle tells you, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. of some who were exceedingly unrighteous; and yet, through the infinite goodness of God, they were washed from the guilt and filth of their sins, justified by the righteousness, sanctified by the Spirit, and adorned with the precious graces of Christ. Therefore, do not say, O despairing soul, that thou shalt die in thy sins, and lie down at last in everlasting sorrow. Did it make for God's glory to pardon *them*? and will it be a reproach to him to pardon *thee*? Did their unworthiness turn God's mercy from them? why then shouldst thou fear, that thy unworthiness shall so turn the stream of mercy, that thou must perish eternally?

3. Tell me, is not man's salvation of free grace? "By grace ye are saved." Eph. ii. 8.

The Lord Jesus Christ is a gift of free grace; *God so loved the world, that he gave his Son, not his servant; his begotten, not his adopted Son; yea, his only begotten Son,* John iii. 16.

As Christ is a gift of free grace, the precious covenant of grace is also such: "I will make my covenant between me and thee;" (Gen. xvii. 2.) in the original, "I will give thee my covenant." God loves freely: "I will heal their backsliding, I will

love them freely." Hos. xiv. 4. "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people ; but because the Lord loved you." Deut. vii. 7, 8. The ground of God's love is only and wholly in himself. There is no love nor loveliness in us, that should cause one ray of his love to shine upon us ; but there is such enmity, filthiness, and unfaithfulness in every man's heart, as might justly provoke God to their eternal ruin.

Again, God justifies us freely : " Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." Poor sinners are likewise pardoned freely : " Him (viz. Christ) hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and a saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." And they shall be saved freely : " For the wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Thus you see, that all is of free grace.

Why then, O despairing souls, should you sit down sighing under such black and dismal apprehensions of God, and your own state ? What though thy heart be dead, and hard and sad, thy sins many, and thy fears great ? Behold, here is glorious, rich, matchless grace set before thee. O let these waters refresh, and these cordials strengthen you, that your mourning may be turned into rejoicing, and that the rest of your days may be days of gladness.

4. Tell me, do you understand, and frequently and seriously ponder upon those particular scriptures which do most clearly and fully discover the mercies of God to poor sinners ? as Psal. lxxxvi. 5. Neh. ix. 17.

Have you also pondered upon these words in Isa. lv. 7, 8, 9 ? " Let the wicked forsake his way,

and the unrighteous man," or rather, "the man of iniquity," "his thoughts : and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon ;" or, as in the original, "he will multiply to pardon."

Ponder, likewise, seriously upon Numb. xiv. 19, 20. Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Mic. vii. 18, 19. Isa. xxx. 18, 19. Psal. lxxviii. 34—39. Psal. ciii. 8—13. Jer. xxxi. 1—14. Luke xv. 20—24. and 1 Tim. i. 13—17. O ! there is so much grace and goodness, so much mercy and glory sparkling through these scriptures, as may allay the strongest fears, scatter the thickest clouds, and cheer up the saddest spirits. Why then, O despairing soul, dost thou make thy life a hell, by having such low and mean thoughts of God's love, and by measuring it in the narrow scale of thy weak and dark understanding ?

5. Tell me, do you not do infinite wrong to the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, that speaks better things than the blood of Abel ?

Hath it brought many thousands to glory already ? and can it not bring *thy* soul to glory ? Hath it actually delivered an innumerable multitude from the wrath to come ? and is the virtue of it so far spent, that it cannot accomplish *thy* deliverance ? Are there not still thousands of millions who shall hereafter be saved and justified by this blood ? Why then shouldst thou despair of salvation ?

It is said, that five monks were studying what was the best means to mortify sin ; one said, to meditate on death ; the second, to meditate on judgment ; the third, to meditate on the joys of heaven ; the fourth, to meditate on the torments of hell ; the fifth, to meditate on the blood and sufferings of Jesus Christ : and certainly, the last is the choicest

and strongest motive of all. If ever you would cast off your despairing thoughts, then dwell and muse much upon, and apply this precious blood to your own souls; so shall sorrow and mourning flee away; the Lord shall be your everlasting light and glory; you shall no more be called forsaken, for the Lord will rejoice over you. The Apostle, on account of Christ's blood, cries out, "Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died;" he looks upon all his enemies, and says, "In (or over) all these we are more than conquerors." Rom. viii. 34—37. Oh, despairing souls, to all your former sins, add not that of making light of the blood of Christ.

Despairing souls, you see that others, whose condition was as bad, if not worse than yours, have obtained mercy. God hath turned their hell into a heaven; hath remembered them in their low estate; hath pacified their raging consciences, and quieted their distracted souls; hath wiped away all tears from their eyes; and hath been a well-spring of life unto their hearts. Therefore, be not ye discouraged, but look up to the mercy-seat. Remember who is your rest; and slight not any longer, by despair, the loving-kindness of the Lord.

II. The *second* impediment to assurance is, Men's entering into disputes about those things which are above their reach.

Since God hath cast Satan out of Paradise, and bound him in chains of darkness, he makes use of all his skill, power, and experience, to draw men into the same misery with himself; and, if he cannot prevent their entering at last into Paradise above, he will labour with all his might to make their life a wilderness here below. For this purpose, he will busy their thoughts about the decrees of God, and their own particular election, that by this means he may keep them from that desirable

assurance which would yield believers a heaven of joy here, and of glory hereafter.

Now, thy wisdom and thy work, O doubting soul, lieth not in disputing, but in believing, praying, and waiting on God. Adam disputes with Satan, and falls and loses Paradise; Job resists Satan, and stands and conquers. When Satan would engage thee in debates, say to him as in Deut. xxix. 29: Things which are revealed belong unto me, but secret things belong unto the Lord.

Christians, if you would leave disputing, and be much in believing and obeying, assurance would attend you; and then should you lie down in peace, and none should make you afraid. Job xi. 13—20.

III. The *third* impediment that keeps men from assurance is, The want of a thorough examination of their own souls, and of what God hath done, and is doing in them.

He who will not seriously and frequently observe the actings of God upon his soul, may complain of the want of assurance; and he will be long in attaining it. O ye wavering and disquieted souls, know for a truth, that you shall never experience the sweetness of assurance, till your eyes be turned inward, and till you dig deep into your own hearts. Do not deceive yourselves: it is not a careless and slight searching of your hearts that will enable you to see the secret and mysterious work of God upon you. If you do not search as for hidden treasures, you shall never find Christ and grace.

IV. The *fourth* impediment to assurance is, Mistakes about the work of grace.

The way to remove this impediment is, wisely and seriously to distinguish between renewing and restraining grace, and between temporary and sanctifying grace. For your satisfaction on thi

head, I refer you to my treatise entitled, "Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices."

V. The *fifth* impediment to assurance is, Men's grieving and vexing the Spirit of grace, by not hearkening to his voice, by refusing his counsel, and by attributing to him what ought to be attributed to their own passions, or to the powers of darkness.

Doubting souls, if ever you would have assurance, you must observe the motions of the Spirit, and submit yourselves to his guidance; you must live by his laws, and tread in his steps. This is the way to have him for a sealing, witnessing, and assuring spirit.

VI. The *sixth* impediment to assurance is, Doubting souls making their sense and feeling the judges of their spiritual condition.

What heart can conceive the fears and perplexity that will arise from the soul's reasoning thus? I find not that the countenance of God is towards me as formerly; therefore, surely, my condition is bad: I feel not such warming, cheering, and quickening influences of the Spirit as formerly; therefore I am not in a state of grace, and I shall die in my sins. To make sense and feeling the judges of our spiritual condition, what is it but to make ourselves happy and miserable in one day, nay in one hour? Are your sense and feeling scripture? Why then will you make them judges of your spiritual state? Is it not by the word, that all men and their actions shall be judged at last? "The word that I have spoken," says Christ, (John xii. 48.) "the same shall judge him in the last day."

The counsel that I shall give you is this: Make the scripture alone the judge of your condition; maintain the judgment of the word against that of sense and feeling; and if, upon a serious and impartial comparing of your heart with the word, the word

declares you to be sincere, and to be born again; then cleave to this testimony, joy in it, and give no more way to doubts and fears. Let your countenance be no more sad: for nothing can make that soul miserable, which the word of God pronounces to be happy.

VII. The *seventh* impediment to assurance is, Remissness, carelessness, and indolence in religious services.

How active and lively are men in pursuing after the world! but how lifeless and inactive in the ways of grace and holiness! Doubting souls, remember that the promise of assurance is made, not to the slothful and idle, but to laborious and diligent Christians. “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” 2 Pet. i. 10, 11. See also John xiv. 21, 22, 23. O remember, slothful Christians, that God loves activity in duty. He who would wear the crown, must run the race; so he who would get assurance, must be unwearied in duty. It is only fervent prayer that is effectual, James v. 16. God suits his returns to our requests. Lifeless prayers shall have lifeless answers. When men are dull, God will be dumb. Elias prayed earnestly, James v. 17. or, as it is in the original, *prayed in prayer*, and God answered him.

VIII. The *eighth* impediment to assurance is, Men’s living in the neglect of some ordinance, or in the omission of some religious duty.

As you would have assurance, seek the Lord in every service and duty wherein he is pleased to make known his glory and goodness. Doubting souls, consider seriously, that all the ways of Christ

are *ways of pleasantness*, Prov. iii. 17. Cease then to complain, and be more conscientious in waiting upon God continually, and it shall not be long night with your souls.

IX. The ninth impediment to assurance is, An immoderate love of the world.

As it is very hard for a rich man to enter into heaven, (Matth. xix. 23, 24.) so it is very hard for a worldly Christian to get assurance of heaven. The thick clay of this world doth so affect and sink him, that he is not able to pursue after assurance with that earnestness and fervour which are necessary to obtain it. It is said, Gen. xiii. 2. that "Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold :" in the original it is, "Abraham was very *heavy* ;" to shew, saith one, that riches are a heavy burden, and a hindrance many times to a Christian's comfort and happiness. Solomon got more hurt by his wealth than good by his wisdom. The things of this world are like Jonah's gourd; a man may sit under their shadow for a while, but they soon decay and die. "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?" Prov. xxiii. 5. Worldly Christians, complain not of the want of assurance, but sincerely humble yourselves before the Lord, for having so eagerly followed after lying vanities; for having been busied about many things, to the neglect of Christ and assurance. Get this world under your feet. Remember, you and the world must part, or else assurance and your souls shall never meet. When a worldly Christian is saved, he is saved as by fire. God will not give the dainties of heaven to those who are surfeited with the delicacies of earth. Such Christians, as with Esau, prefer a morsel of meat to this best of blessings, may at last, with Esau, seek with tears this heavenly jewel; and yet, like him, be rejected.

X. The *tenth* and last impediment to assurance is, The secret cherishing of some darling bosom-sin.

Ah! how many are there that dally with sin, even after they have put up repeated prayers against it, and have lamented and bitterly mourned over it! How many are there that complain of their deadness, frowardness, censoriousness, and other evil tempers, and yet are often ready to gratify, if not to justify, those very sins! He who is resolved to indulge any sin, must resolve to live in many fears.

Now, that I may remove this impediment, which is of such dangerous consequence to the souls of Christians, I shall first offer a few considerations to engage them to indulge no longer their bosom-sins; and then I shall point out what course must be taken to subdue them.

The *first* motive to engage you to exert all your strength against bosom-sins is, seriously to consider, that this will be a demonstration of the sincerity of your heart. “I was also upright before him: and I kept myself from mine iniquity:” that means, “I kept a strict and diligent watch upon that particular sin to which I found myself most inclined; and this is to me a clear evidence of the uprightness of my heart with God.” The truth is, there is no hypocrite in the world who doth not dally with some bosom-sin; though at times, and upon carnal accounts, he may seem very zealous against this or that sin; as might be shewed in Saul, Jehu, Judas, and Herod: therefore, if you would have a sure evidence of your uprightness, trample upon your bosom-sins. This will yield more comfort in the day of darkness and trouble, than at present you have faith to believe.

2d, Consider that the conquest of your darling sins will render that of other sins easy. When Goliath was slain, the rest of the Philistines fled.

3d, Consider the great damage that your souls have already sustained by your bosom-sins. By giving way to these, you have lost your spiritual strength, communion with God, the Spirit of light, life, liberty, and glory; yea, joy unspeakable, and peace that passeth all understanding. O that the sense of what you have lost formerly, and are daily losing by indulging sin, might provoke you effectually to mortify it!

4th, Consider that the conquest of one bosom-sin will yield a Christian more glorious comfort and joy than ever he hath found in committing all sins.

5th, Consider that it is your duty and glory to do every day what you would wish to have done upon a dying day. Thrice happy is the soul that doth thus! There is no way to peace and comfort like it. When you find your hearts running after bosom-sins, expostulate thus with yourselves: "O our souls! would you thus indulge and cherish sin on a dying day? Would you not rather hate, mourn over, and pray and watch against it with all possible earnestness? Would you not tremble at sin more than at hell, and abhor the very occasions of sin, more than the most venomous serpent? Would you do this upon a dying day? Why not then every day?"

6th, Consider, that till bosom-sins be conquered, fears and doubts will still haunt the soul. The soul will still be fearing that surely all is naught, and that the work wrought upon it is not real but counterfeit. The indulgence of sin will raise such a dust in the soul, that it will not be able to see the pearls of grace in their native beauty. This will quench the Spirit, and clip the wings of faith and prayer; so that the soul can neither be constant, nor fervent, nor confident in religious services.

FINIS.

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